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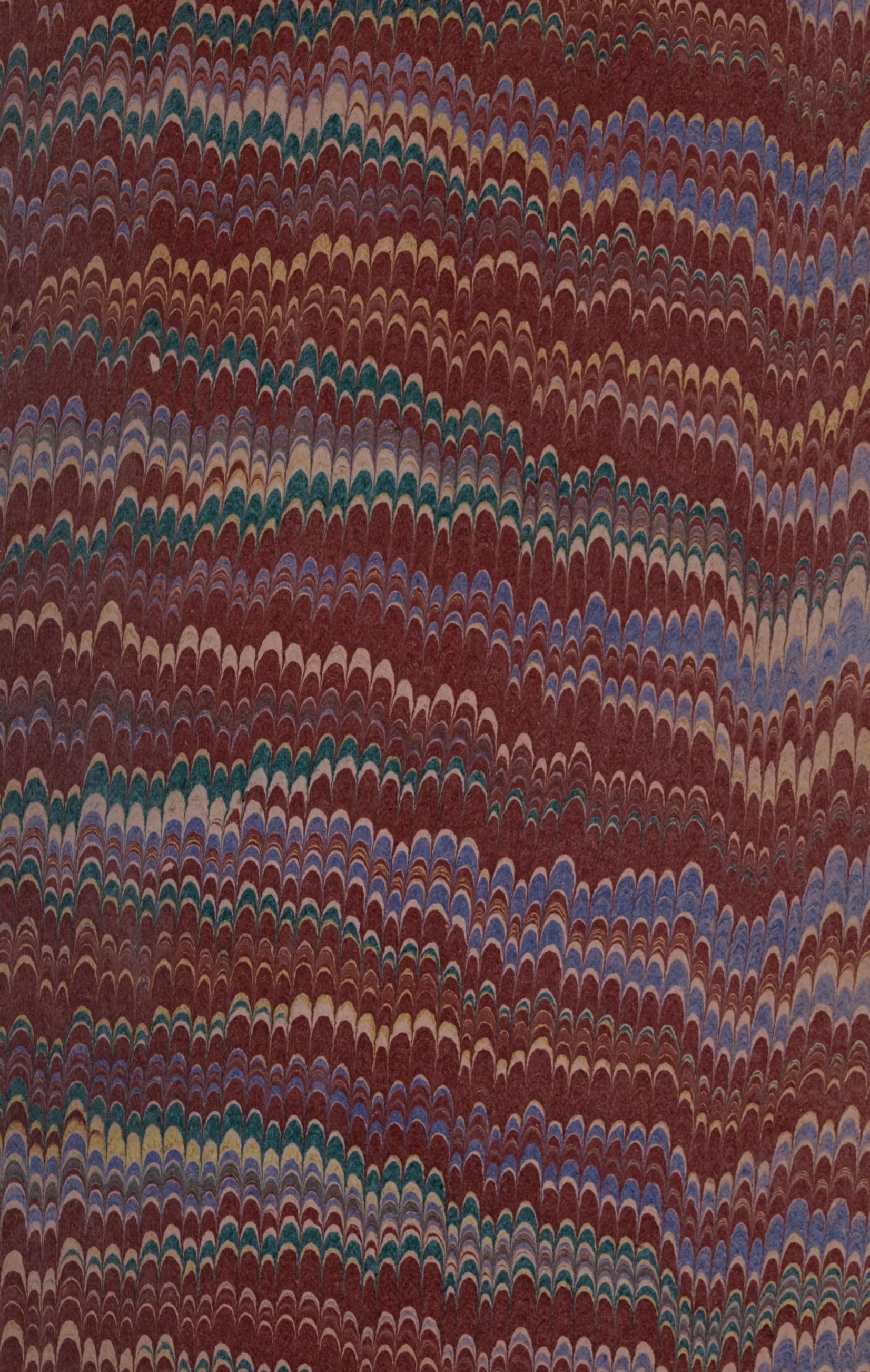
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A MEMBER OF TATTERSALL'S

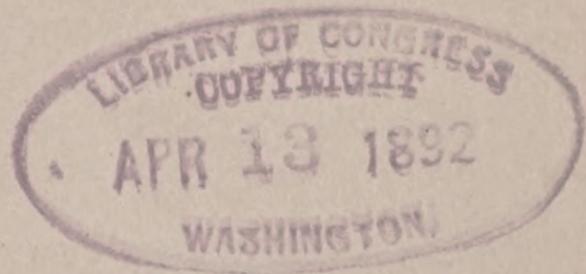
A NOVEL

BY

HAWLEY SMART

AUTHOR OF

"A FALSE START," "FROM POST TO FINISH," "LONG ODDS,"
"SADDLE AND SABRE," ETC.



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A MEMBER OF TATTERSALL'S.

CHAPTER I.

MR. HORWICH, M. T.

THE turmoil of the day's racing was over, and about the long table in the coffee-room of the George Hotel at Nottingham were collected a lot of sporting men, whom the pursuit they followed had for the time thrown promiscuously together. They consisted mainly of book-makers of the better class, but sprinkled among them were a few of their habitual foes, or shall I say victims? who numbered themselves among the gallant army of backers. The battle had been fierce that day; men had wagered in the wild way that they did in the plunging era of twenty years ago, and for

once in a way the fielders had had the worst of it. The luck had run against them all through the meeting; the "odds on favorites" had always managed to scrape through, though more than once the finish had been so close that their supporters had quaked for their money, and even when one not quite such a favorite in the market had got home in front, he turned out to have been backed to win a heavy stake by those immediately connected with him.

"Well, Captain," said a stout, florid man, "you've had a rare innings this time; I reckon I'm stone broke. I haven't had such a meeting since that awful Doncaster four years ago, when you gentlemen well nigh 'skinned the lamb.' Don't you remember, how none of you could go wrong, and how rumor said that three or four of you had broke the ring, and there would be no settling on Monday? There was, though, but it was a tight fit for a good many of us."

"Yes, Horwich, I remember," replied the

gentleman addressed, a tall, good-looking fellow with a heavy blonde mustache and most insouciant manner; "those were times. I don't suppose backers ever gave you such a dressing all round, either before or since. We've done well here, but nothing to that."

"No," laughed the bookmaker. "We couldn't stand many weeks like that. I was never so put to it to find the money since I began; and there was very little helping one another, for we were all in the same boat. By the way, sir, you used to know Mr. Craft; you know who I mean—the gentleman there was that trial about afterwards. He was terribly hard hit. Have you ever heard anything of him lately?"

"No," replied Captain Fladbury, somewhat surprised. "Why, what makes you ask?"

"You knew him pretty well, sir?" said Horwich.

"Yes. I was at college with him, but I never saw much of him afterwards."

"Well, it's a curious thing," continued the

bookmaker, "he was said to have left England immediately after that trial; it was a closeish thing, if you recollect, although he got off. I heard the other day he had come back."

"Yes," rejoined Fladbury; "but the man was acquitted of that robbery, and he can't be tried over again for it."

"No, sir," replied the bookmaker but it's a queer story. This Mr. Howden Craft was one of the very few gentlemen who had an awful Doncaster that year. You see he kept a few horses, and though he knew a bit more about it than those who had been at it for years. He meant pulling off two or three very good things at that meeting, and, to do him justice, he did go very near, but as it was he lost a lot of money, some of it to me. Well, he went round to ask for a bit of time, but, bless you, we were all so hard hit, we all wanted what little we could lay our hands on. He was in a frantic state when he found that he must either settle sharp or be posted as a

defaulter. You see, he had that flying Lady Teazle, with which he won the Cambridgeshire afterwards, in the stable, about whom nobody knew anything, and knew he could win it all back if he could only keep out of the defaulter's list."

"Well, Horwich," said Fladbury, without removing his cigar from his lips and with the air of a man somewhat bored with the subject, "he got the money and paid up—Jews, I should think—won a big stake at Newmarket not two months later, so got out of his scrape cleverly. Don't think much of your story. This sort of thing has happened to most of us."

"No, but look here, Captain," replied the bookmaker emphatically; "this Craft is desperately hard up for money on the Thursday, his uncle is robbed on the Saturday, and on Monday afternoon he has plenty of stuff with which to pay us all at Tattersall's. Put that and that together."

"That's exactly what the twelve men in the

box who tried him did," retorted the Captain, with a shrug of his shoulders, "and came to the conclusion, as far as I remember, that he didn't commit the robbery, because at the time he was proved to be two hundred miles or so away."

"Ah, but I can tell you a bit more than that," said Mr. Horwich, with a knowing glance.

Suddenly a gleam of interest shot across Fladbury's face.

"What does it matter to either you or me," he said, in his usual indolent manner, "whether Craft committed the robbery or whether he did not?" Then suddenly changing his tone he looked his companion straight in the face and added: "What interest have you in knowing?"

Mr. Horwich looked confused, hesitated, and even seemed what his interlocutor had never yet seen him, at a loss for an answer.

"Well, Captain," he said at length, "you may have seen by the papers that Mr. Craft's

uncle is just dead. Now I know more about him than you do, and I tell you this Howden Craft is a pretty bad lot. He'd most likely come into a bit of money, I fancy. Now I want him to do the straight thing."

"Owe you much?" asked the Captain laconically.

"Don't owe me a stiver," retorted Mr. Horwich. "I wouldn't bother about myself, but I want him to act right to those who've a claim on him. And just between you and me, I think he's more likely to run straight if I've a pull over him."

"As I have said, I don't know much about him, but it's always as well to have the whip hand of a shifty one," remarked Fladbury vaguely.

"That's just it," continued the bookmaker eagerly; "business is business. And if I lay you a point shorter odds than you ought to have, it's all in the way of trade, remember, and you mustn't think the worse of me for that. Human nature's human nature, and

we ring-men are much the same as you swells when you come to our feelings. You wouldn't see a good girl bullied and ill-treated by a good-for-nothing cur, more especially if you had a sharp bit in his mouth. That's what I'm aiming at."

"I don't see," said Fladbury, "how I can help you; but if you're going to champion all young women who've been badly treated, you will find your hands pretty full——"

"No matter, you can help me if you will. For instance, you knew Craft's uncle, Mr. Elton?"

"Yes. I have stayed at St. Katherine's; and also know his daughter, Miss Elton. She comes into the property no doubt, and a very nice thing to come in for too."

"That's it, sir, that's it again. You can help me, Captain Fladbury, in the way I want. I haven't got the whole case ciphered out to my mind yet, but as soon as I have, I'll tell you the story. A line to your club will always find you, I suppose, sir?"

“Yes,” replied Fladbury, “but now I shall go and get a breath of fresh air outside. It’s rather close in here.”

When Cis Fladbury got into the street and continued walking up and down on the pavement in front of the hotel, it was most assuredly with no idea of thinking over Horwich’s rather prosy story; and yet somehow he could not get the thing out of his head. He really felt no interest in Howden Craft or what became of him. He had never known much of him—they had been acquaintances at college, but never intimate. After leaving the University he had seen but little of him and yet for a short time there had been one week in each twelve-month which they usually spent in the same country house. Ten years ago Mr. Elton, then a hale, active man of fifty, had been in the habit of gathering his friends around him at St. Katherine’s for the Doncaster week.

Very pleasant indeed had those gatherings been, and as the son of his father, who was an

old friend of Mr. Elton's, Cecil Fladbury had been a constant guest there, as also had been Howden Craft. These went on for about six years, when the robbery of which Horwich had spoken took place. It had been attended with considerable violence; indeed, so roughly had Mr. Elton been handled that he never got over it; and that was the last party ever assembled at St. Katherine's for Doncaster races. The injuries Mr. Elton received on that occasion, there could be no doubt, considerably shortened his life. It had all happened a good four years ago, and faded pretty well out of Fladbury's memory, until Horwich recalled it to his recollection. Now it all came vividly back to him. They had all dispersed, he remembered, on the Saturday morning, and on the afternoon of that day Mr. Elton, who was known to have won a considerable sum of money at Doncaster, was attacked on his way into the town, where he was going to deposit his winnings in the bank, and robbed. He called to mind the arrest of Howden Craft, and the strong feel-

ing there was at the time that the magistrate who committed him for trial had made a mistake. Craft had not seen the meeting out, but left on the Friday morning for London; and when arraigned for the robbery, proved conclusively that he had dined at seven o'clock in London on the Saturday, and that it was perfectly impossible for him to have committed that robbery in the afternoon and yet to have been present at this dinner in the evening; that not even a special train could have conveyed him to town fast enough, and that even had that been possible the railway officials must certainly have cognizance of such a fact.

One thing struck him as singular. Horwich spoke positively of Howden Craft being a loser at that meeting. Now it was one of those rosy times which engrave themselves upon the memory, and Cis felt certain that Craft had made no complaint of that nature. He was a reticent man, no doubt, neither given to exult over his good fortune, nor make moan

when the battle ran against him; but still on such occasions men do wax confidential in the smoking-room, and talk over the day's doings; and with such a Doncaster as this, had been, such talk had been pleasant subject of conversation to the whole party. No; Horwich was all wrong. He had been avowedly so hard hit himself that he probably got utterly confused over the whole business, and thought because Craft had lost a bit of money to him that he was likewise a heavy loser on the meeting.

Fladbury really ought to have known better. Had he not experienced, had he never come home in a carriage the inmates of which were all in the highest spirits, and, as he listened to their tale of success, muttered low beneath his mustache, "Every one has won but me?"

Confound the thing! he would think of it no more. He had been awfully sorry about the whole business at the time—grieved to hear that his genial host had been so knocked about by some tramping ruffian, who had probably attacked him treacherously from be-

hind in the first instance; otherwise Mr. Elton was a hale man for his years, and likely to have made a sturdy resistance to any single nomad of the highways. What favored this supposition, too, was the fact that when he recovered his senses he declared that he should be utterly unable to identify his assailant, even should the police succeed in laying hands upon him. And even when told that his nephew had been arrested on suspicion, replied querulously, "It might as well be him as any one else, for all I can say about it." Then Miss Elton recurred to his mind, and he wondered what would become of her. He had known her from a school-girl; she was a pretty girl, and a well-dowered one to boot. It was odd she should be still unmarried, and yet it must be so, or he would assuredly have heard of it; still she had lived a very retired life ever since her father had met with such brutal treatment. The miscreant who assaulted him had turned a hearty middle-aged gentleman into a decrepit old man; and Emily Elton had de-

voted herself to her father and declined all country visiting that took her away from home for more than the day.

Another thing occurred to him was, what assistance could he be to the bookmaker? He didn't exactly know what Horwich wanted; that he was desirous of getting a hold of some sort upon Howden Craft was clear enough, but what use he intended to make of it, should he succeed in obtaining it, Cis Fladbury had so far no idea. That was a point, too, upon which he must be fully informed before he stirred a finger in the matter. He cared nothing about Craft, but he was not going to help to put a poor devil under the screw without knowing why the winch was to be applied. As far as he could see, the only possible use he could be to Horwich was in ascertaining whether Howden Craft had come into any money under his uncle's will, and that probably was just what the bookmaker was anxious to know.

"Bah!" he muttered, "an ordinary case of chantage, no doubt, and my friend Horwich

understands that, as the French have it, there's no making a bird sing that can't—you can't get money out of a man who hasn't got it. And Horwich probably thinks it as well to be certain on that point before he troubles himself further about fitting on the thumb-screws. He's not a bad sort, like many of his brethren, abused often as they are; but he owned having a little private feeling against Craft, and I think, Master Howden, if he ever has your thumbs in the nippers he'll give 'em an extra squeeze. You had better not have come home, if he can rake up anything against you. By the way, what the deuce brought him home? His uncle's death, no doubt. That looks as if, whether he inherits anything or no, he expected to. Ah, well, that explains the whole thing. No doubt he owes money in the ring, and before he went abroad told Horwich or some of them that he would 'book up' at his uncle's death—that he should come into a bit of money then, and would settle with them all round. Horwich, however, don't seem to

think his word is as good as his bond, anyhow. Time to turn in and sleep the sleep of the just. Talk about narcotics, bosh! there's nothing like a real good day on the race-course to make one sleep."

CHAPTER II.

ST. KATHERINES.

SITTING in a bay window of a many-gabled house between two and three miles from Doncaster is a young lady who is now mistress of all those smiling fields and bonny moorland that lies around St. Katherine's. Emily Elton was thinking rather sadly over the last few years. Her father had died, as it happened, just about the time of the Doncaster races, and she mused over the gay gatherings there used to be in the old house before Mr. Elton had been struck down by the ruthless hand of that vagrant robber. Life had been somewhat dull for her, since she had found her father left both a cripple and an invalid upon her hands. It had been no fault of his; he had borne his affliction bravely. An active man, he had never repined when, on finding

himself lame for life, he had to abandon both gun and saddle. He, who hardly knew what a day's illness was, bore like a stoic the constant attacks of neuralgia, an inheritance which his brutal assailant had bequeathed to him. He was not an exacting father to Emily by any means; on the contrary, he had no wish to chain her young life to his invalid chair, and compel her to share the monotony of his own. He was always trying to persuade her to mix more freely in the gaieties of the neighborhood; but if he was an indulgent father, she was a devoted daughter, and positively refused to leave home for any length of time while he lived. She had been busy with Mr. Dawes, her father's country lawyer, that morning, and knew that house and lands were now all her own. It was not a large estate, but one which, for all that, yielded a very comfortable income, and was utterly unencumbered. She thought of that terrible evening when her father was brought in all covered with blood, and so severely injured

that he was even unable to state what had occurred, of the weary weeks of nursing, of the anxious interviews with the doctors, of the hue and cry for the robber or robbers, and of that final horrible sensational act in the drama, of her cousin Howden being arrested as the culprit and put upon his trial. What a sad, sad time she had of it; how her heart had been torn with conflicting feelings, fierce thirst for vengeance on the assailant of her father, and burning indignation that the myrmidons of the law should have dared to suspect her cousin Howden of being the perpetrator of the outrage!

She had known Howden from her childhood, and was very fond of him. He had made rather a pet of her when she was a little girl, had often interposed successfully when her waywardness had provoked her governess to a stern enforcement of discipline. They had been good cousins later on, and it was quite possible that, without any passionate enthusiasm (they had known each other too long for

that), they might have joined hands for life; but the utter ruin of Mr. Elton's health had changed all this. Howden Craft had left St. Katherine's the day before Mr. Elton took that walk of ill-omen into Doncaster, and had never crossed its threshold since. It was singular that he should not have come down to see his uncle, an uncle too with whom he had been always such a favorite, but so it was. He had written once or twice to herself, to inquire after him, particularly requesting that his uncle might not be informed of such letters, but he had never volunteered a visit; and as soon as a jury of his countrymen had acquitted him of the crime, he had gone abroad, to America it was rumored. Still there was this to be said: Mr. Elton peremptorily declined to receive all visitors at that time. Many of his old friends had wished to come down and see him for a few days, but he declared that he was not equal to it, all of which Emily Elton in her heart suspected as not being quite the truth. She feared, indeed,

that the shock to his nervous system had been so severe that he would contract a morbid dislike to seeing any one; but after a few months he got better, and during the remainder of his life many of his intimates often spent a few days with him, but he always displayed an unconquerable aversion to having any one at St. Katherine's during the Doncaster race week.

The hearing of her father's will might well bring all the sad story back to Miss Elton. That everything would be left to her was only what she had a right to expect and what her father had always given her to understand; that there should be a legacy of ten thousand pounds left to Howden Craft was also only reasonable and what might have been expected; but why there should be a codicil revoking that bequest, puzzled the girl exceedingly. The will had been drawn up when Miss Elton came of age, a little over a year before that fatal Doncaster meeting, the codicil had been added two years later. She wondered what had become of her cousin; she

had never heard from him since those few lines of farewell which he had written her just before leaving England. He had made no mention of where he was going, but had railed bitterly against the world generally. "Though an iniquitous judge had the audacity to sum up against me in face of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, twelve unprejudiced men, after patiently listening to all that was brought forward on either side, found me guiltless of the shameful crime of which I was accused. Society, on the contrary, without enquiry, seems inclined to pronounce otherwise, and sentence me to social ostracism. It is the old story, only throw enough mud, and some of it will stick. This country is no longer any place for me; although legally declared innocent, my old associates eye me askance, and, by Heavens, one may as well commit murder as be suspected of it. Good-bye, Emily, you are the only creature I care to say good-bye to; don't quite forget me, and let me find in years to come, when all this miserable business is for-

gotten, that you still retain a kindly recollection of your unhappy but most affectionate cousin, Howden Craft."

"It's very singular," she murmured. "What could have made papa put in that codicil? There is no other addition or alteration in the will, only that. The impression, of course, it gives is, that Howden somehow or other offended him, but how could he have done so? They parted here on the best of terms, as I can personally vouch for, and papa neither heard from nor saw him again before he left England. We have known nothing about him since, and except that shameful charge, of which we know he was guiltless, there has never been anything alleged against him. Yet it was not like papa to do a thing like this without a reason. I wonder where Howden is now; whether he ever does mean coming back to this country or whether he is, as for all I know he may be, in it now. I wonder whether he knows papa is dead. I wonder—Ah," she concluded as she dropped her head upon her hands, "if it

was dull here before, how dull it will be living here all alone; and I am so alone! Neither brothers nor sisters as other girls have, nor even cousins, except Howden, that I know anything of," and here tears trickled down her cheeks as she thought of what an isolated being she was in this world.

She was aroused by the entrance of the old butler, who had known her from a child, and who had never yet arrived at addressing her by her proper title of Miss Elton.

"What is it, Giggleswick?" she asked.

"Beg pardon, Miss Emily," he replied, in a quiet subdued manner, fitted to her late bereavement, "but there is a gentleman wants to see you."

"You ought to have known better, Giggleswick. You ought to know I can't see any one as yet."

"No, miss, but this is a very particular gentleman—one of the family, so to speak. I thought perhaps, miss, you'd make an exception of Mr. Howden."

“What, my cousin Howden?” she exclaimed. “Quite right; that’s a very different thing. Show him in at once.” And in another minute or two Howden Craft, nothing changed during his four-years’ absence, entered the room, and cordially embraced her.

A glance at his attire showed Miss Elton that he was aware of his uncle’s death.

“You have heard of my sad loss, I see,” she said. “Poor papa, he never recovered the attack of that dastardly villain on the moor; but he sank peacefully to his rest at last. And the end, I am glad to say, was attended with no suffering.”

“Do you mean to say that he never recovered from the attack of that cowardly tramp? You don’t mean to say that the injuries he received on that occasion led to his death?”

The girl bent her head sadly.

“He was a cripple to the end of his days,” she replied, “and the doctors have no doubt they shortened them besides.”

“Did he ever express his disbelief in my

being guilty of the crime with which I was charged?" exclaimed Howden eagerly.

"No; he was very ill, you know, at the time; but of course he looked upon you as innocent, as we all did. It was the most preposterous accusation ever brought against any one."

"And my uncle died without expressing any opinion on the subject?" inquired the young man, with an anxious look.

"Just so," replied Miss Elton. "He never could bear any allusion to that terrible afternoon. I sometimes think he was disappointed that you did not come down to St. Katherine's and appeal to him about your innocence. Why didn't you, Howden?"

"You forget," he replied, "that, in the first place, I was a prisoner and my movements were not at my own command, and, in the second place, Emily, I, too, had my pride. Your father had known me from my childhood, and he might at least have told you to write a line to say that he held me guiltless of such a shameful outrage as an attack on

him would have been. No, it was impossible for me to cross his threshold until he had at least done me that justice."

If Miss Elton had been often puzzled as to why her cousin had not paid them a farewell visit before leaving England, she was fain to confess he had, at all events, reasonable grounds for the omission.

"How long have you been in England?" she asked, after a short pause.

"A very few days," he answered. "I saw my poor uncle's death in the papers immediately on landing, and though I had vowed never to set foot in St. Katherine's till he had done me justice, yet I knew that you, at all events, believed in me, and you do, Emmie, don't you?" And he pressed her hand tenderly.

She smiled assent.

"I remembered that you might be all alone in your trouble, and, without knowing exactly how, it struck me I might be of some use to you in your sorrow. Sympathy from those we love is always precious at such times."

“It was very kind of you,” she said. “I dare say you are hungry. If you’ll just touch the bell, Giggleswick shall find you something to eat and drink.”

“No, thank you; I lunched before I left Doncaster. I have got a bed at the ‘Reindeer,’ and am going to stay there for two or three nights. Ah, what a deal of trouble and misery I have gone through since I last set eyes on the old town.”

“It’s very nice of you, Howden. I am dreadfully lonely just at present; but there are plenty of spare rooms here, if you like. Yes, we’ve all had a deal of sorrow since you were last in Doncaster.”

“Ah, well,” rejoined her cousin, “we must hope that there are more cheery times in store for us. Poor Uncle John is now beyond all the ills of this world, and I hope I’ve about done the only thing left for men so miserably placed as I have been, that is, lived the foul calumny down. As for you, Emmie, you are left châtelaine of a fair domain, and in due

time will give it a lord and master, and live happy, as the story-books say, forever after."

Had there been a shrewd observer of this *tête-à-tête*, I think he would have been struck by the keen though furtive glances that Howden Craft shot at his cousin as he made this remark. It might have occurred to him that, ingeniously worded as it was, this was nothing more than a direct inquiry as to whether by his will John Elton had made his daughter unconditional heiress of all he possessed, also a cleverly masked desire to know something about the details of the said will, but in this Craft was doomed to disappointment.

"You're a mighty soothsayer, Howden," replied Emily, smiling, "and utter rose-colored predictions regarding my future, upon no grounds whatever. Touching your own, I have no doubt you are right, and that the world generally have already forgotten such a cruel charge was ever brought against you."

"There you are wrong," he retorted bitterly. "They will not forget I was charged with the

felony, though they will most likely forget I was acquitted of the crime. And now, my dear, I must be getting back to mine inn. I'll come over to lunch to-morrow if you will allow me." And with a warm pressure of the hands the cousins parted.

"Ah," soliloquized old Giggleswick, as he watched Craft striding down the drive, "there's an old saying, 'Take 'em with the tear in their e'e,' and apparently Mr. Howden is of that way of thinking. My faith, he's lost no time, and he's right. Miss Emily's not the girl to lack wooers with all those braw acres in her grip. 'Take 'em with the tear in their e'e.' Well, I've done with all that kind of foolishness now, but when I thought of being a family man, hang me if I could ever catch 'em in that state. They'd always a grin on their lips instead, whenever I began to talk about it, and the last hussy I touched on the subject with, had the impudence to tell me that whenever she *did* change her name it shouldn't be for such a one as Giggleswick."

CHAPTER III.

LIZZIE PENISTONE.

ANY idler who might have been strolling about the purlieus of merry Islington could not have overlooked on wall and hoarding the magnificent posters of the Variety Theatre; and among the great public favorites announced as contributing to the entertainment, it would have been impossible that the name of Miss Lizzie Penistone, that popular pet of the public, as she was duly designated, could have escaped notice. Her name was printed in very big letters indeed, and she was further described as a versatility actress. The music-hall *habitué* would have formed a very good idea of what to expect from Miss Lizzie Penistone. She would sing serio-comic songs in a very moderate voice and with a good deal of

accentuation, and was probably on winking terms with her audience. She would dance a little, displaying as a danseuse considerable more agility than grace, the whole crowned with an air of ineffable assurance and satisfaction; but upon this occasion the *habitué* would have found himself disagreeably disappointed. Miss Penistone was a pretty, modest young woman who sang ballads in a very sweet voice and who danced very nicely and without a trace of vulgarity. She was a most decided favorite with the audience, and indeed in the theatre generally, but, as the young ladies of the ballet expressed it, "she kept herself to herself, and was that stand-off she had no chance to pick up a sweetheart." Be that as it may, Miss Penistone seemed quite content to be without admirers. Outside the theatre she was known as Mrs. Clover, and lived quietly with her little boy in one of the small streets running off Upper Street. She had been on the stage from a child, and Islington had known her in her public capacity, on and

off, for the last twelve years. She had disappeared at times, taking, no doubt, other engagements, but she always turned up again and was welcomed back with the liveliest satisfaction. The manager of the Variety never wished to part with her, but she said she required change, that it was not good for an actress to stick always in the same theatre, that she couldn't be too widely known, etc., and it was during one of these disappearances that she had met and married Clover.

About Clover there was a decided mystery. Who or what Clover was, and whether Clover was alive or dead, was all quite unknown to the good people among whom she dwelt. All they knew was that Lizzie Penistone had returned from one of her habitual disappearances with a small boy, a wedding-ring, and, announcing her marriage, had given all her friends and neighbors to understand that in private life she was henceforth to be known as Mrs. Clover. The one thing that struck the few intimates of Lizzie Penistone as singu-

lar was that she never made the slightest allusion to her married life. Her mother lived with her, and Lizzie had to support both Mrs. Penistone and her own boy. It was hard work. Lizzie was popular in her profession, and rarely out of an engagement; but the salaries paid at theatres of the Variety stamp are not large, and with three mouths to feed there was not much margin for either sickness or taking a holiday. She was making a decent living, but was by no means, as our cousins express it, "making her pile."

There is a term common enough in theatrical journals the meaning of which I can never help speculating upon, and that is "resting." It possesses two such totally different meanings. Miss Montespan "resting," may mean that that young lady is simply enjoying very pleasant holidays with very pleasant friends; or it may mean that Miss Montespan, the mother of half a dozen children, is unfortunately out of an engagement, and pondering how that hungry family is to be fed. In this

latter case it is devoutly to be hoped that Mr. Montespan is not also resting.

Miss Penistone has got on her hat and cloak, and has just called to her mother to look after little Jack when his supper-time comes. Suddenly there is a knock at the door, and, with the easy assurance of an old friend of the family, the visitor saves the servant all trouble by opening the door himself, and is at once addressed by Lizzie as Uncle Tom.

“How provoking!” she continued. “I am just off to the theatre. What made you come at this time? Stop, I’ll tell you what we will do. You shall come with me and see our show, and when I have finished we will walk home and have supper together, and you shall tell me all your news.”

“All right, my girl,” replied Mr. Horwich, “but I want to talk with you to-night. I have news for you, Lizzie, strange news.”

“Is it about him?” she asked hurriedly. “Nothing bad, is it, uncle? He is not ill, not—”

And in her agitations her mouth refused to syllable the word. "As for money, he—" "Not he," replied the bookmaker angrily. "He's well enough, and a precious deal better than he deserves to be. That you can still care an atom about him after the way he has treated you, beats me. He left you without the least compunction, without even saying good-by."

"He couldn't help it, he couldn't, indeed. There were reasons which you don't know—reasons which I cannot explain to you."

"I know a good deal more than you are aware of," replied Mr. Horwich. "But how can you forgive his never writing a line to you all these years? Of his never having contributed anything to the support of you or your boy?" And then the bookmaker indulged in some opprobrious mutterings, among which the term "white-livered skunk" was most audible.

"Hush, uncle, hush!" cried Lizzie. "I can't listen to such abuse of him as that, and I

won't," she cried with an angry stamp of her foot. "As for money, he hadn't any, most likely. After just the first, he never seemed to have any; he was not of the kind that made it. At horse-racing some must win and some must lose. And he was one of those that lose."

"Not so much of that, either," replied Mr. Horwich. "He had some very fair slices of luck—there are lots of bigger fools about than him, my dear."

"Here we are, and now I must leave you. Come out after I have done my second turn. Meet me at the stage-door, and we will walk home. One word more. Is he in England?"

"Yes," replied the bookmaker shortly, and with that proceeded to make his way round to the main entrance of the building. Once inside, he soon stumbled across one or two professional brethren, and, what with the entertainment and the discussion of one or two important handicaps that were looming in the

immediate future, Mr. Horwich passed a most agreeable evening, and was not only highly delighted with his niece's singing, but still more with the reception she met with.

On their arrival at home they found that Mrs. Penistone had got a nice little supper all ready for them. The good lady had made a few additions to the ordinary meal in honor of her brother's arrival, but it was not until supper was over and her mother had betaken herself to bed that Lizzie touched upon the subject which engrossed her whole mind.

"You said my husband had returned to England," she observed. "Have you seen him? Where is he—in London?"

"I have neither seen him nor do I know where he is, but his name was among the passengers that arrived from New York on board the *Scotia* last week. But I have no doubt that I speedily shall know. If he's in London, I certainly shall know, unless he has utterly changed his habits. Now I want to ask you one question. What made you take

a situation as barmaid at the 'Falcon,' in Aldersgate Street?"

The girl flushed for a moment, then looking steadily into her uncle's face said, "And who told you that I had taken such a situation?"

"Well, if anybody had told me I should have told him that he lied," replied Mr. Horwich blandly, "but when it comes to my own eyes I can mostly trust them. And if I didn't see you skipping about in the bar there, or office, or whatever they call it, may I never lay odds again."

"That's a question I can't answer," replied Lizzie. "If you're sure you saw me there, I suppose you did, but I can tell you nothing about it. You must forgive me, uncle. I don't like mysteries any more than you do, but I have a secret in my life which is not my own."

"Well, Lizzie, I'll bother you with no more questions. But what are you going to do with this husband of yours, now he has returned to

England? Are you going back to him? He deserted you; are you going to forgive him?"

"I don't know what I shall do," rejoined the girl with considerable hesitation, and playing nervously with her fingers on the cloth. "I have first to learn his wishes on the subject."

"His wishes!" cried the bookmaker angrily. "His duties come a long way before his wishes. Let him own you as his wife before all the world. It's all very well, my girl; people up here are very good-natured, and take your version of your marriage without question, but you'll find it won't be so everywhere; folks'll insist upon knowing a bit more about Mr. Clover, or they'll believe there ain't one. Now I'm not going to have your good name lost because this——well, no, I won't say it——fellow won't do what's right. Let him live with you here a few weeks and acknowledge you as his wife, and then he may take himself off to New York or anywhere else he likes, the further the better—it can't

be too far. We don't want anything more from him."

"Indeed, uncle, you mustn't interfere; you must leave me to manage my own affairs. If you can, get me my husband's address. I implore you not to come between us. You don't know what mischief you may do, not only to him, but to me."

The good-natured face of the bookmaker was troubled, and he looked hard at his niece, and then in a low tone said, almost entreatingly:

"Lizzie, he is your——"

"Ask me no questions," she cried, springing to her feet; "I can tell you nothing. You must wait patiently until I can explain; but, believe me, uncle, any interference on your part will only make mischief."

"Well, my dear," replied Mr. Horwich, rising from his chair, "I had hoped as you would have answered that question right off the reel. Now, look'ee, Lizzie, I'll bother you no more; but either that chap makes you an honest woman, or I'll make England a precious sight

too hot to hold him. As I said before, I know a bit more than you think I do. Good-night."

"Oh, uncle, don't go yet," cried Miss Penistone; but the bookmaker, in his righteous wrath, was not to be stayed. He had always been uneasy in his mind regarding his niece's marriage, and now he felt sure that she had been deceived, and that no such ceremony had ever taken place. Fierce were the imprecations and threats of vengeance on her betrayer that he muttered as he strode homeward to his own rooms.

Lizzie sat up for some time after her uncle had left her, in considerable dismay at the knowledge he had so unexpectedly revealed. She had no wish that that episode in her life should be known to any of her friends or relations. It might be rather below the dignity of an artist to take such a situation; still, she did not mind that herself: there was not much to be said against it. Many respectable young women had been very glad to earn their own living by taking such a place, and it was no

false pride that had made Lizzie so desirous that this experience of hers should not be known. She had been at the "Falcon" only a very few days, and, so far as she knew, had encountered nobody whom she had ever met before. How could her uncle have seen her? And how was it that she didn't see him? Why hadn't he spoken to her? Perhaps he was a well-known customer there. Anyway, it was most unlucky that chance should have brought him there during her brief sojourn at the hotel. She had taken the situation with a purpose, if she could be said to have even held it at all; for she had only been taken as an assistant in the office, and her duties had been more those of a book-keeper than a barmaid. No, she had been very anxious that nobody should know of that engagement; should it come to the ears of any of her friends or acquaintances, they would be sure to ask what had induced her to take such a place. She had done so with a purpose, and she wished the whole transaction buried in oblivion. She had done

that of which she was ashamed; she would have done it again under the like circumstances, but assuredly she would have liked to banish the whole thing from her memory were it possible. Of all people in the world to have found out she had taken temporary employment at the "Falcon," her uncle was likely to prove the most mischievous. Nothing would do for him but knowing the reason why, and no man so likely to eventually get at that why than Tom Horwich. In his present frame of mind there would be no holding him. He had left her in anger, and before she should see him again the mischief might have been done. Well, she could do nothing—there was nothing to be done—and with a sad heart and a sense of impending evil Lizzie Penistone sought her pillow.

CHAPTER IV.

LOOKING BACK AT THE TRIAL.

HOWDEN CRAFT remained three days at Doncaster, and nobody could have accused him of neglecting his opportunities. He spent a good portion of each day over at St. Katherine's, and behaved with admirable tact. He had once more established himself on the old footing of a favorite cousin, and was paving the way to gliding imperceptibly from that into the rôle of a favored lover. He had been always very fond of his cousin Emily, and thought, not unnaturally, that when time had softened her sorrow she would be a fair bride for any one to win. And he was not unmindful of the fact that she would be a well-dowered one to boot. Howden, too, was very persistent during his stay in cultivating intimate relations with his late uncle's old friends,

especially those who were likely to have accurate knowledge of his testamentary dispositions, such as his doctor, Mr. Dawes his lawyer, the clergyman, etc. From all of these he heard the same story, that everything had been left unreservedly to Emily, with the exception of some small legacies, though, except Mr. Dawes, none of these gentlemen had actually seen the will. The lawyer owned that he had not only seen it, but drawn it; and added that, practically, it really concerned nobody but Miss Elton, and to one or two insidious questions of Howden's as to whether there was not any mention of himself in it, he gave evasive answers with professional dexterity. At the end of three complete days Howden considered he had accomplished as much as was possible at present. He had thoroughly established himself on the old intimate terms with his cousin Emily, and to press for more just at present he felt would be foolish. He had clearly ascertained that he benefited nothing under his uncle's will, though he had been dis-

appointed in his endeavors to find out whether he had been mentioned in it at all or not. He was not a sensitive man, but even he thought Mr. Dawes was rather chilly in his reception of him, as if, in spite of the verdict of acquittal, a taint of the old accusation still clung to him. He could not help it, but was fain to admit that a charge of that nature was harder to live down than even he had anticipated.

Captain Fladbury, in the course of his usual custom, was wandering from one country house to another in pursuit of either hunting or shooting, and, from one cause or another, found himself in one of these mansions at midnight left sole tenant of the smoking-room. Even under much more discouraging circumstances than the present it would never have entered Cis' mind to go to bed without his second cigar. Though not an inveterate smoker, he *did* smoke, and held cigarettes of all kinds in unmitigated contempt. "Give me a pipe or cigar," he was wont to observe,

“and I’m all there; but as for this paper trash, it only makes one anxious to know when smoking is going to begin.” Now tobacco, with nothing to do and no one to talk to, though soothing, is rather monotonous, and Cis, in spite of his cool, almost phlegmatic manner, had a lot of reserve force about him somewhere. His eye roved over the book-case, and it occurred to him that this was a favorable opportunity to improve his mind. “Make one jolly sleepy, if it does nothing else,” he muttered, as he strolled across the room to the shelves. Suddenly the “Annual Register” caught his eye. “Ha! the very thing. I’ve been meaning to do it for the last fortnight. Here’s the volume for that year, and hang me if I don’t read up this trial of Howden Craft’s again. I don’t recollect it quite as well as I might do; but, as far as my memory serves me, Horwich has nothing to go upon. I know I have heard somewhere that lawyers always regard an *alibi* as a very doubtful defence, but I fancy this was as un-

impeachably proved as is possible." Cis set himself steadily enough to his task, but for all that he neglected to do what is very essential when it comes to forming any reasonable judgment in such matters, namely, to read it all. There was scarce time enough to do that, he thought; he knew the prisoner had been acquitted on an *alibi*—he would merely read the evidence upon which that *alibi* had been established. That he had left St. Katherine's and gone up to London on the Friday there was ample testimony. The robbery had been committed on the Saturday, it was presumed, at about three o'clock, and it was conclusively proved that Howden Craft on the Saturday had dined with five other gentlemen at the Falcon Hotel.

At half-past seven on the evening of that day, of these five gentlemen, four had appeared in court and corroborated the defendant's statement. All four swore solemnly to having been present at this dinner, which had been given by one of the party, called Fletcher. As for the

fifth, he had sailed for America between the robbery and the trial, and could not therefore be laid hands on to give evidence. The waiter also, who had been the principal attendant upon them swore most distinctly to the defendant's presence on that occasion. He seemed, however, to have been rather a stupid witness, and cut but a poor figure in the hands of the cross-examining counsel. He was hazy upon many points; not so clear as was desirable, for instance, about the date of the said entertainment. He knew it was toward the end of the Doncaster race-week, but seemed a little uncertain as to on what day that dinner took place. They had always a good many dinners on; they did a great business in that way; it was difficult to feel quite sure some weeks afterward as to the exact day a particular dinner took place; could swear positively there was such a dinner, and that the defendant and the other four gentlemen present in court were all at it.

“Could he trust to his memory?”

“Yes, he could; it mightn’t be what it was when he was young, but,” he concluded testily, “he could tell the time of day pretty well now, perhaps as well as the gentleman who was asking him so many questions.”

An assistant waiter gave similar testimony, save that he was still more undecided about pretty well everything, even to the identity of the defendant with one of the gentlemen who had dined at the “Falcon” on that occasion. The proprietor of the hotel produced his books; did not keep them himself, but had perfect reliance on the young ladies in his office; all dinners were supposed to be entered as they occurred, and to the best of his belief they were. He had not the slightest cause to think otherwise. Dinners were mostly settled for before the gentlemen left, but in the case of an old customer they were sometimes booked. Mr. Fletcher was a well-known customer, and that dinner had not been settled for until two or three weeks later. It was then shown that Mr. Elton left home about half-past two with

the avowed intention of walking across the moor into Doncaster for the purpose of banking his winnings on the week. That it would have taken him about half an hour to walk to the place where he had been so cruelly maltreated and robbed, and that though it was very possible for his assailant to have made his way from the scene of the assault to the Doncaster station in time to catch the three-thirty-six train for town, still that train was not due at King's Cross until six-fifty; and supposing the train to be punctual to the minute, that would only have left the defendant ten minutes in which to get from the station to the Falcon Hotel and dress. All this gave rise to much cross-questioning as to how Mr. Fletcher and his friends were dressed, and further as to whether their dinner was served at seven sharp.

The waiters were unanimous on this point, "they was all dressed in evening clothes," but as to the dinner being punctual on the table, the head waiter waxed sulky and dogmatic.

“Of course it was punctual; when gentlemen ordered dinners they got them at the time they were ordered. It might be the fashion to serve meals higgledy-piggledy in some houses, but when a gentleman had said seven, the ‘Falcon’ said seven too, and if the dinner was late, it was the fault of the gentlemen, not the fault of the ‘Falcon.’ Nobody was late upon this occasion, and therefore of course dinner was served at the time it was ordered.” And then the head waiter cast a withering look upon his persecutor, as a man who had accurately demonstrated an indisputable fact to a very obtuse adversary.

When he had got thus far, Cis Fladbury put down the book and pondered deeply about what he had read.

“Now,” he said to himself, “let me consider. When I was told that an *alibi* was an unreliable defence, what grounds were given me for its being so? Ah, yes, I recollect: my legal friend said that unfortunately impecunious human nature is apt to be ready to ‘swear to almost any-

think' for a consideration. The worth, therefore, of an *alibi* must lie considerably in what are the characters of the witnesses. Now, let's see: here's Mr. John Fletcher and Mr. Anthony Brooklyn, gentlemen connected with the turf. Ah, well, if there are plenty of 'straight uns,' there's a goodish sprinkling of 'wrong uns' connected with that pursuit. Richard Welside, gentleman, the first witness: I barely know him by sight, but he's all right. He really is what he professes, though a bit of a fool, I fancy. Still, Welside's evidence is quite to be depended on. Mr. David Abednego: well, I don't know anything about him, and I dare say he's a very worthy gentleman; still, I don't think I should ask him to dinner; sounds the sort of fellow that one would look up after a bad week when one was anxiously endeavoring to raise the necessary shekels for Monday. Then we've the two waiters; very good men in their line, but they didn't cut up brilliant in the witness-box. A good dogged old conservative, that head fellow, chap that would

insist on your having hock after fish, whether you would or not, and evidently considers the 'Falcon' the first hotel in Europe. I can't think how it was they came to arrest Craft at all. I recollect at the time it being said it was absurd, there was no case against him. As for his knowing that Mr. Elton had had a good week, and that, living close to Doncaster, he always settled there, well, we all knew that; the police might just as well have accused me. Why, we were all winners—stop, though: no, if Horwich is right, Craft was not. I wonder what it was made them accuse him. Why on earth should they suppose that he was the culprit? The only thing I ever heard against him before this trial was that he dipped into the racing a little too deep for his means. He and his uncle were on the best of terms apparently. It would have been much simpler to have borrowed it than to go into the highway business. By the way, I've heard nothing from Horwich since, so I suppose his discoveries have all ended in nothing. Time to go to bed.

I must put off ascertaining how the law came to pounce upon Howden Craft for another time," and throwing the butt of his cigar into the grate, Cis picked up his candlestick and made his way to his room.

Now this particular point that Fladbury had put on one side for future consideration had exercised the public mind very much at the time of the trial. It really did seem hard that a man of Howden Craft's acknowledged position should be accused of such a crime on such slender grounds. The sympathy of the county ranged itself entirely on his side. Abuse was lavished freely on the magistrates who committed him; it was said that the police had accused him simply because they felt bound to accuse somebody, that they were really quite at a loss, but did not like to confess it. Then came sensational paragraphs in the papers to the effect that "We are not at liberty to disclose;" that "it would be injudicious as yet to make public," etc., but all giving their readers to understand that startling revelations might

be expected on the trial. But the trial produced nothing of the kind, and although it was rumored that the most important witness for the prosecution had unexpectedly disappeared, still the general opinion had been that the prisoner had been an unjustly accused man, that there was not sufficient evidence to warrant the bringing of so serious a charge against him, and if ever the thing was got to the bottom of, as far as Craft was concerned it would be found to have been prompted by personal animosity.

There had been one other verdict, though not official, on the case. Mr. Dowdsdell, Q.C., one of the shrewdest old criminal lawyers in practice, had pronounced the counsel for the defence, whom he was known to detest, "even a bigger fool than he had thought him."

As Craft was acquitted, his brethren naturally asked him, "Why so? What more could his counsel do than win?"

"Win!" ejaculated the irascible old lawyer, "he was sure of an acquittal in any case; what

did he want with that *alibi*? *Over-proving* your innocence is a terrible mistake, and has hung many a man. You want a verdict in your favor—that's enough; you're not called upon to prove your client pure as undriven snow."

Mr. Dawes of Doncaster.

His Fladbury might think that Mr. Howden had ceased to trouble himself about Howden's misdemeanors, but Miss Penstone knew her uncle better. She knew him as a man of undaunted perseverance about anything he had once set his mind on. He was a man of substance now, and stood well in the profession he had adopted, and he owed both his money and his present position entirely to hard work and, it might be said, strictly straightforward dealing. Many of his clients could tell of trials that he had done when dark days were upon them. She dreaded his inquiries for she feared the result of them; she did not know what she feared that harm would come of them, and, trained to high or not, Howden's late was the love of her life.

CHAPTER V.

MR. DAWES OF DONCASTER.

CIS FLADBURY might think that Mr. Horwich had ceased to trouble himself about Howden Craft's misdemeanors, but Lizzie Penistone knew her uncle better. She knew him as a man of undaunted perseverance about anything he had once set his mind on. He was a man of substance now, and stood well in the profession he had adopted, and he owed both his money and his present position entirely to hard work and, if sharp, strictly straightforward dealing. Many of his clients could tell of friendly turns he had done when dark days were upon them. She dreaded his inquiries, for she feared the result of them; she did not know what, but she feared that harm would come of them, and, married to him or not, Howden Craft was the love of her life. She

might never see him again, but neither act nor word of hers should ever bring sorrow to him, she vowed. See him—yes, she longed to do that, but it must be at his own wish; she was far too proud a girl to seek him if it was his desire that all should be over between them. Her uncle had flung in her face that this man had left her; she was fain to acknowledge that it was so, but she also knew that circumstances left him no option but to leave England. Why had he not taken her with him? Loyal in her love, she answered this question to herself by saying that he knew best whether it was wisest to leave her behind or not. To her never having heard from him for the past four years, she deliberately shut her eyes. Times had very likely gone hard with him, and he had never been able to make a home to offer her. Write! men were so careless about such matters; probably he was waiting till his luck turned, and he could send her home money and the welcome mandate to come out and join him. Come what would, she would be stanch to him to

the last; she would wait patiently till he summoned her to his side; if he had ceased to love her, it would be better that they should never meet more in this world. She could bear anything better from him than cold looks and the feeling that she was a drag upon his life.

Rather a romantic girl, this Lizzie Penistone, though she did dance and sing in a second-class theatre for her livelihood. His niece is quite right. If Mr. Horwich has not been heard of as yet, it is not that he is the less resolute in his purpose, but he is somewhat at a loss to know how to begin. When an offence cannot be proved against a man at the time, the lapse of years does not, as a rule, make such proof easier. Mr. Horwich had taken a dislike to Howden Craft over some turf transactions which had brought them together, and being a man of strong feelings, he had never overcome it. Lizzie was a great favorite with him; he was very fond of her and immensely proud of her, firmly believing that her taking the town by storm and becoming a

leading actress at a leading London theatre was an affair only of time. He had been bitterly disappointed when he found out that she was, as he thought, secretly married to Craft. He had been very angry, though slightly consoled on finding that Howden had deserted her after the trial, and, though much disgusted at that worthy's return to England, had immediately conceived the design of compelling him to openly acknowledge his wife, and now the girl herself not only declined to say she *was* Howden's wife, but also to assist him, her uncle, in making Craft do her justice. "But," he vowed viciously, "justice he would have if money could obtain it," although, perhaps, it is open to question whether he was not confusing vengeance with justice in his desire to bring Howden Craft to his knees. From what he knew of that gentleman, he was neither to be intimidated nor dictated to, except by those with very much the whip-hand of him. At the time of the trial, his aversion to the accused had led him to form a different opinion

from the public and the jury; endeavoring to prove that old calumny true seemed to offer the most effective weapon he could lay his hands on. He disliked Craft, and thought him guilty of the robbery, because he was disposed to think him guilty of anything; but then he was compelled to admit that pretty well nobody else did, when suddenly there flashed across the bookmaker what may be termed an inspiration, such as sometimes comes to men of his class in the course of their business; and their peculiar business renders them adepts in the art of putting two and two together, if they are ever to get a good living out of it. There must have been somebody else with equal dislike and disbelief in Howden Craft to himself, in the first instance, or that accusation would never have been started. Now, who was that? Such was the idea that suddenly came to Mr. Horwich.

“Now, who is this person?” thought the bookmaker. “He knows a bit, and I know a bit, and if we put the two together, it’s pos-

sible we should make up between us a little story that thief, Craft, would rather not have flying about. Now, where is this chap? If I can only find him, I shouldn't at all wonder if my friend Mr. Howden Craft is dished;" and in default of anybody else, the bookmaker winked confidentially to the sitting-room generally. Mr. Horwich was so delighted with his new idea that he determined to set to work to find "this other" without delay. He did not expect that the discovery would be easy; but he was of a sanguine disposition, and not a man to be daunted by difficulties. In ten minutes he had settled two things to start with: in the first place, that he must write to Captain Fladbury and ask him if he knew where Howden Craft was and what he was doing; in the second, he must read the record of that trial attentively through from end to end, though it struck him that what he particularly wished to get at would be found in the early part of it. Cis Fladbury, as we know, had confined himself to the account of the *alibi*, but

then Mr. Horwich was considerably more in earnest about the matter than Cis. In the account of the case the bookmaker thought that the moving spirit of the prosecution would be found in the beginning, and having made up his mind, Mr. Horwich lost no time in carrying both his projects into execution. Captain Fladbury had plenty of friends in Yorkshire, and in a very short time Mr. Horwich received a few lines from Cis, informing him that Howden Craft was or had been staying at Doncaster, that he had visited his cousin at St. Katherine's, that the general impression was that the news of his uncle's demise had brought him there, and that it had been somewhat of a disappointment to find that there was no mention of himself in the will.

Mr. Horwich read and reread this letter, but he was obliged to confess there was little help to solving the puzzle he had set himself to be gathered from it. He knew Craft was in England, he guessed that he was a needy man; nothing was more natural than that he should

go down to Doncaster to see if he had benefited in any way by John Elton's death. Attentive perusal of the trial made him decide that a solicitor named Dawes, who had been intrusted with the getting up of the prosecution, was presumably the presiding spirit of it. He learned, on inquiry, that the Dawes alluded to was a Doncaster attorney, and then a glimmer of light flashed across Mr. Horwich. The records of the trial were all very well, but the initial of the whole thing had been the examination before the magistrates. Who was it that had pressed them for a conviction—who was it that had set the law in motion against Howden Craft in the first instance? At whose bidding had Mr. Dawes interfered? Had he done so on his own account? No, that was hardly likely; still, it might be so. The one thing quite clear to the bookmaker now is that he must prosecute his further inquiries in Doncaster, and that the first person there he must have a talk with is Mr. Dawes, solicitor.

“I'd rather it wasn't a lawyer,” thought the

bookmaker; "they're so plaguey hard to get a story out of; they seem to think anything they say may be used against them, and are as hard to draw as a gentleman who is stone broke. However, I've just got to see what I can make of Dawes, and that's the long and short of it. Stay, what a fool I am; there's the Captain could do me a turn if he would; he knows a lot of these Yorkshiremen. It's odds on his knowing some of the beaks who tried this case. I'll just write him a line about it. Doncaster?" said Mr. Horwich, chuckling. "I wonder what it will look like. Never saw it in my life, except during the race week; from what I've heard tell, the very grass grows in the streets for the rest of the year."

A man of decision, the next afternoon saw Mr. Horwich on his way to Doncaster, and a few hours afterward he was comfortably installed in the coffee-room of "The Salutation."

A busy man, the bookmaker was not given to reflect further upon the past than as it affected the present. Still, he could not be

quite insensible to the spirit of the place. He had never seen the famous old inn except thronged with waiters trying to attend upon twenty people at once, with men calling for refreshments of every description, with anxious speculation on all sides as to what was to win t' Leger or t' Coop. He hardly recognized it in its solitude. Still, he could not but think of all the racing-lore that had been discussed within its walls, and of all the flyers of the turf that had been stabled in the loose boxes of its long, straggling yard, ere they went forth to do battle on the town moor. The turf notables, both human and equine, that "The Salutation" had seen within its precincts would form well-nigh a chronicle of the turf from its earliest day. There is a thriving town up north about which a sporting writer said of its shrewd, hard-headed population that they never took six to four when the odds were thirteen to eight, and I agree with him that that town is likely to remain prosperous. Yorkshiremen have the credit of being hard to *best* at a bet

or a bargain. "We learn from Horace, Homer sometimes nods." I once lunched with a friend at "The Salutation," and it was my friend's first visit to Doncaster. He had the highest opinion of Yorkshire astuteness, and when requiring change for a sovereign the waiter actually neglected to take for the lunch out of the change he had brought, my friend shook his head as a man with another illusion dispelled. He has been unsettled in his geography ever since, and I fancy has serious doubts as to whether Doncaster really is in the many-acred county.

The next morning Mr. Horwich started to call on the solicitor. He was quickly ushered into the presence of Mr. Dawes, who waited patiently to hear what his perfectly unknown visitor had to say. To suppose that Mr. Dawes had not a fair general knowledge of racing would be to suppose him such a human being as never existed in Doncaster, but he was not in the least given to speculating upon it; and though he certainly did know some of the mag-

nates of the ring by name, he had no personal acquaintance with them, and was wondering a little who Mr. Horwich was and where he came from. But when the bookmaker, dashing *in medias res*, said that he wished to talk over the trial of Howden Craft some four years ago for highway robbery, the lawyer most unmistakably retired into himself, and it was evident to even the totally unabashed Horwich that the wish was by no means mutual.

“Mr. Craft was acquitted of the crime. I can't see that there is anything more to be said about it,” rejoined the lawyer briefly.

“Things may have changed a good deal since then; there may be a lot more known about this Craft than there was then.”

Dawes looked at him intently for a moment, and then said: “You are of course aware that the law punishes aspersions on a man's character pretty sharply. You know best whether it's worth your while risking a trial for libel.”

“Now, what's the use of beating about the

bush like this? Let's come to the point at once," exclaimed the bookmaker.

"Certainly," murmured Mr. Dawes.

"Oh, hang it all!" cried Mr. Horwich, "this'll never do. I've found out a bit about this Mr. Craft, and, for reasons of my own, I am anxious to get to the rights of the whole story. Now you got up the case against him. What were you going on? What made you suspect him?"

"I don't admit I did suspect him. I was the local attorney employed to get up the case for the prosecution."

"Well, then," said Mr. Horwich, "who did suspect him? Who set the police on his track? What made them take him into custody?"

"A warrant for his apprehension was applied for, and the police arrested him accordingly. They do take up the wrong person sometimes, as you must know if you ever read the daily papers."

"Of course I know they're dashed stupid," said the bookmaker, "but——"

“Not so stupid as you think,” interrupted the attorney. “They must make mistakes at times. If you don’t arrest a man when you can, you perhaps can’t arrest him at all, and you may arrest the right man and yet not be able to prove him guilty.”

“Then you think this Mr. Craft was guilty?” said the bookmaker eagerly.

“I wasn’t employed to think about it. My business was solely to collect evidence to prove that he was so,” remarked Mr. Dawes dryly.

Mr. Horwich paused for a moment, and then with an honest burst of admiration slapped his thigh and exclaimed, “Well, you are a deep ’un. I should just like to see ’em get stable secrets out of you, or to find out which of your lot you meant winning with. Now let me think a moment. Yes, that’s the only way to deal with a wide-awake chap of your kidney. If I put my cards on the table, will you be my partner, sir?”

“If you want to consult me professionally, Mr. Horwich,” replied the other coolly, “re-

member half-confidences don't pay with your solicitor."

The bookmaker's admiration rose beyond all bounds. If he and Mr. Dawes could only put their knowledge together, he felt sure he could place the yoke upon Howden Craft's neck. The lawyer had told him nothing, and it might well be because he had nothing to tell; but that was not at all Mr. Horwich's belief. He thought that if he willed Mr. Dawes could a tale unfold, of which it was possible that he could supply the missing links, and while arranging his ideas in order to disclose all he knew, he was completely disconcerted by the solicitor quietly remarking:

"Excuse me, Mr. Horwich, but my time is valuable this morning. If you will just jot down the heads of what you want to say, and will call upon me this afternoon at three, I shall be happy to advise you if you still desire it." And before the bookmaker had quite recovered from his surprise, he found himself bowed courteously but decidedly out of the office.

der his professional mask Mr. Dawes concealed a pleasant manner enough, but he was a habitually reserved and a somewhat suspicious man with those of whom he had no knowledge.

CHAPTER VI.

CIS FLADBURY'S ADVICE.

WHEN Mr. Horwich in the afternoon took himself back to the attorney, it was with a mind quite clear as to his plan of action. If anybody could help him in his scheme for avenging himself upon Howden Craft, it was Dawes. He would certainly have to go to a lawyer sooner or later, and he saw that he had not only fallen across a very sharp member of the profession, but one who, to start with, was better up in the case than any of his brethren. He found Mr. Dawes, too, most decidedly changed in his manner toward himself. What had happened in the interval the bookmaker could not even guess, but the suspicious reticence of the morning was replaced by an assumption of cordiality in the afternoon. Un-

der his professional mask Mr. Dawes concealed a pleasant manner enough, but he was a habitually reserved and a somewhat suspicious man with those of whom he had no knowledge. With the gentlemen of Doncaster and the neighborhood, he enjoyed the reputation of being a very able and straightforward practitioner.

“Now, Mr. Horwich,” he said as the book-maker again entered his office, “by your returning, I conclude you have made up your mind to confide in me. I had pretty well made up my mind not to discuss the case of Mr. Craft with you any further, but I have heard something about you since which has made me change my mind. You shall tell me, first of all, your reason for being anxious to revive this old charge against him.”

“Revenge,” said Horwich hoarsely. “I want to have him under my heel, so that I can grind him to powder if he doesn't do what I want him to.”

“Very good,” replied the lawyer, as blandly

as if the bookmaker had expressed the most laudable and Christian-like reasons for wishing to proceed against Craft. "Now, you'll pardon me, but is it on account of money?"

The bookmaker shook his head.

"Because it's fair to point out that Howden Craft is not a penny-piece the better for his uncle's death, and that I don't think any pressure could possibly wring anything out of him."

"No sir; he has wronged one near and dear to me," rejoined the other fiercely.

"No occasion to go into a painful subject," interposed the lawyer. "Now, have you any fresh evidence to bring forward? And remember, don't let any desire to be upsides with Mr. Craft color your story. Stick to facts; don't forget it's facts I want."

"I've told you what I want and why I want it, and I'm going to be straight enough with you, never fear. Well, sir, in the first instance I have taken it into my head that you knew something up here that never came out at the

trial; I'm down here this very minute to see if I can find out that; maybe you couldn't prove it—I don't know. There was a rumor at the time, I remember, that an important witness for the prosecution could not be found. Secondly, I know what none of you did, that Mr. Craft was at his wits' end for money."

The lawyer smiled, but said nothing, though he made a note of this last circumstance.

"Then again about that *alibi* business. I don't understand it myself; but more might have come out about the case, if you had had somebody who knew all the ins and outs of racing to tell you who those chaps were."

"Well, I thought we did pretty well," replied Dawes.

"I don't quite know how it was done; they were all present at that dinner, there seems to be no doubt. And that Howden Craft couldn't have committed that robbery and been at the dinner seems pretty clear, and yet I am sure he did it."

"Come, Mr. Horwich," interposed the lawyer

sharply, "this won't do. I said facts, remember."

"I beg pardon, sir," said the bookmaker: "if you'd put me in the box that time I couldn't have told you much; things became a deal clearer to me afterward."

"Fletcher, I believe, managed the stable with which Mr. Craft was connected at the time."

"Just so, that's it, but one didn't see then what an interest he had in Craft's acquittal."

"Still, these are hardly facts," replied the lawyer. "And Mr. Welside now, was he interested in the same manner?"

"I'm sure I can't say. Quite likely as not."

"You had better tell me the whole story, but don't forget I want facts. I shall be very glad to hear what conclusion you draw from them, but they must be undoubted facts to start with."

"All right, Mr. Dawes, I understand, and will stick as close to the text as I can. We'll leave Welside out of the business for the pres-

ent, because I can't speak positively as to him; and also Mr. Abednego. I shouldn't think any one alive could speak positively about him, furthor than that he knows his way about, but Brooklyn, like Craft, was in Fletcher's stable."

"Mr. Fletcher, in short, was a trainer?" said the lawyer.

"No, he was not, though for the matter of that he knew the business quite as well as any of them. He was more a schoolmaster to young gentlemen beginning racing. He settled what their horses should be entered for, what they should run for, and managed all the trials. What I make out from that is this: I *know* Mr. Craft lost a lot of money at that meeting, and therefore conclude that all the followers of the stable had a bad time, and that Fletcher and Brooklyn also lost a good deal of money. Now of course they'd be terribly anxious to get it back again; people who lose money generally are; and as it happened, they'd a regular ace of trumps in their hand at the time. This was a mare called 'Lady

'Teazle,' which had been overlooked by the handicapper, and had got into the Cambridgeshire at such a light weight as to make the race a gift to her. This mare was Craft's property, and outside the stable nobody had an idea how good she was."

"I begin to understand," said the attorney. "You mean that Fletcher and Brooklyn had therefore a very great interest in Craft's winning the Cambridgeshire."

"Exactly," continued the bookmaker, "and you've not lived in Doncaster all your life without knowing that no horse of which the owner is a defaulter can start for any race held under the rules of the Jockey Club."

"I see; and therefore if Mr. Craft didn't succeed in discharging his liabilities over Doncaster, 'Lady Teazle' would not have been allowed six weeks later to start at Newmarket. Very easy to understand the interest Messrs. Fletcher and Brooklyn had in that. But explain this to me. Mr. Craft's Doncaster account was promptly settled on Monday at Tat-

tersall's. Now, what reason was there for Fletcher and Brooklyn to subsequently swear that they were present at a dinner that didn't take place? Craft's liabilities were settled, there was nothing to prevent 'Lady Teazle' from starting for the Cambridgeshire; men don't take the consequences of perjury for nothing."

"Why, dash it all, Mr. Dawes, you don't believe they'd let a convict win the Derby, do you? Why, if Craft had been convicted of highway robbery his horses would have been all sold for the benefit of the Crown, or his creditors, or somebody. You ought to know better than I do what becomes of a man's property under such circumstances, but nobody ever heard of a gentleman in Her Majesty's prisons running race-horses. Besides, even if he had been allowed to stick to his property, I think it's likely he would say to his friends, 'You've got to see me out of this scrape, or "Lady Teazle" won't be wanted at Newmarket.' Now, the stable had already picked

up a lot of money at long shots about the mare, and they weren't likely to miss such a gold-field as they had before them, if they could help it."

"Good!" observed the lawyer approvingly; "that's the whole of your story as far as that part of the case goes."

Mr. Horwich nodded.

"Summed up, it comes to this. It was very much to the interest of Fletcher and Brooklyn that Howden Craft should be acquitted of the charge of highway robbery, and to that end we consider they perjured themselves, but are unable to prove it. That's all it comes to in the eye of the law. I'm sorry to say, Mr. Horwich, this case doesn't seem to have advanced in the least since I last handled it."

The bookmaker's face fell considerably.

"Now, I'll tell you two or three things you want to know," continued the lawyer. "Oddly enough, we happened to know that Howden Craft had lost a great deal of money here that week, although it was generally supposed that

the gentlemen had had a rattling good meeting, and the St. Katherine's party in particular, and there were one or two men staying there who were heavy bettors—Captain Fladbury, for instance, whom you may probably know.”

“Very well indeed, sir,” replied the book-maker. “The Captain and I have done business together often.”

“Mr. Elton could hardly be described as such, but he became so upon this occasion. He wasn't much of a race-goer, but he thoroughly enjoyed Doncaster. He always, as he expressed it, had a gamble over the Leger week, and almost as invariably lost his money; he was bound to. His eccentricity was this—he allowed himself a certain sum of money every year to play with in that week, and when that was gone he stopped; but when he won he left it down, and the consequence was it accumulated very rapidly, and that meeting he won a very large sum for him, and he was just the man to exult and laugh over it among his friends. We had, however, something

more to go upon, but that secret is not mine. Since I first saw you I have seen the gentleman whose it is, and I am not at liberty to disclose it; but this I can tell you: if we hadn't had a very plausible communication from London we should probably have never taken the case into court. I tell you honestly, there's a good deal to unearth yet before you make anything of it, even presuming Craft is guilty. And then what is your object? The man has been already acquitted; you can't put him on his trial again, you know."

"Can't I socially expose him?" exclaimed the bookmaker anxiously, "or rather threaten to do so unless he complies with certain conditions I intend to impose upon him?"

"The case," said Dawes, "lies in a nut-shell. If the *alibi* is true, then Howden Craft is an innocent man. If ever you can prove it false, then you can prosecute one or all concerned in it for perjury, and that for your purpose would be quite sufficient. Craft may escape any personal consequences of such a trial, but he will

be socially gibbeted. The public would know who robbed John Elton and practically shortened his life. You've nothing more to tell me, I suppose?"

"Not just now," replied Mr. Horwich as he picked up his hat. "I don't forget that you want facts, but I think I see my way into getting at all about that 'Falcon' dinner."

"Good-by, Mr. Horwich. There are plenty of us at Doncaster, for more reasons than one, would like to see the assailant of poor John Elton get his deserts. Make every inquiry you can about the men who were present at that dinner, and remember this, an *alibi* is like a balloon, the slightest prick is sufficient to burst it."

When Mr. Horwich got back to "The Salutation" he found a letter awaiting him at the bar, which he at once recognized to be from Captain Fladbury. He inclosed a letter addressed to Colonel Gunnersley, Haneton Lodge, and accompanying it were a few lines which ran as follows:

“I send you an introduction to Colonel Gunnersley, who is a magistrate on the Doncaster bench, and was further a very intimate friend of John Elton's. He took a great interest in Craft's case, and was one of the magistrates who committed him for trial. Whether he will see you and discuss it, I can't say. I have told him quite clearly what you want, and therefore if he does see you, he will, no doubt, have no objection to talk it over with you, and, perhaps, give his own opinion upon it.

“I read the account of the affair over again in the 'Annual Register' the other night, and came to the conclusion that it all turned upon the *alibi*. If that was true, Howden Craft has been a very hardly used man; if it is false, he ought to have been hung, and kicking him out from the midst of honest men isn't half as much as he deserves. As for the men who were present at that dinner at the 'Falcon,' you know all about Fletcher and Brooklyn; they are not very particular, but I don't think they would go that far. As for Welside, I know

all about him; he wouldn't commit perjury. As for Clawson, the man who has gone away to America, if you don't happen to know, you are not likely to find out anything about him now. It strikes me that Mr. Abednego would pay for looking up. He described himself, I see, as a financial agent, a good comprehensive term which includes rogues of all sizes as well as honest men. His evidence read wonderfully clear and firm; I should think he had been in the witness-box before. I am looking at the whole thing rather from your point of view, but if the whole thing is a thundering lie, it ought to be exposed.

“Colonel Gunnersley commanded the 12th Lancers when I joined them. I know him well. He stands no nonsense, and don't do things by halves. CECIL FLADBURY.”

“It's very good of the Captain,” muttered Mr. Horwich as he finished the above letter, “and this Colonel Gunnersley could probably give me just the hint I want, if he would, but

they're all too cautious like; they want to see all my cards, and they won't show their own. Dawes has told me nothing, except that, like myself, they knew Craft had lost a lot of money that week. He urges me to find out all I can about the past lives of the witnesses to this *alibi*, and now here's the Captain urging me on to the same thing, and suggesting Mr. Abednego to begin with. The Captain don't know much of Mr. Abednego, that's very certain, or he would know there wasn't much chance of coming at Abednego's doings, past, present, and to come. I can hold my own with most men, and am not very particular who I 'take on,' but he's rather too stiff a nut to crack. Now, I'll just call upon Colonel Gunnersley, and see if I can make anything out of him, and then I'm off back to London, and I'll see what I can make of the 'Falcon.' "

CHAPTER VII.

MR. ABEDNEGO.

MR. HORWICH drove over to Haneton the next morning, which was about equidistant both from Doncaster and St. Katherine's, to try what Fladbury's letter would do for him with Colonel Gunnersley. He found that the Colonel was in, and, after the lapse of a few minutes, was further informed that he would see him. Following the servant, he was ushered into the library, where, with his back to the fire, stood a keen-eyed, middle-aged man of medium height and with the manner of one long accustomed to command.

"Sit down, Mr. Horwich," said the Colonel, pointing to a chair. "Captain Fladbury's letter has told me who you are, and what you want. Speak plainly or not at all. Why?"

In a few words the bookmaker explained

that Howden Craft had deceived and deserted his niece; that despite his acquittal he had always believed that Craft had perpetrated the robbery; that could he succeed in collecting proof that it was so, his object was, in return for silence on the subject, to insist that Craft should marry his niece, and then, having made her an honest woman, leave her at the church-door and quit the country in the course of a week.

“And what help do you suppose that I can give you in this scheme? What makes you come to me?”

Mr. Horwich's fraternity are quick judges of human nature, and always disposed to brevity of speech in their own business. The book-maker saw at once that the Colonel was a man who disliked babble.

“You were one of the magistrates who committed him for trial. I want to know why you did so?”

“Evidence not sufficient, you thought, eh?” said the Colonel.

“It struck me so, sir,” replied the bookmaker.
“Quite right,” rejoined the Colonel, “and it was in consequence of the weakness of our case that we refrained from pressing them rather hard on that *alibi* at the trial. If we had proved that dinner to be all a fraud, we couldn’t have proved that Craft committed the robbery. All I can tell you now is, that, under certain circumstances, the case might be reopened, and would be found considerably stronger against Craft than it was before.”

“You can give me no assistance, then?”

“None,” replied the Colonel. “To hunt his murderer to death wouldn’t bring John Elton to life again, and there’s the family name to be considered.”

There was a dead silence; but instead of taking his leave, as the Colonel had anticipated, the bookmaker sat with wide-opened eyes and his face working strangely.

“Murderer!” he exclaimed, at length. “Do you mean to say that this Craft had any hand in the death of Mr. Elton?”

“Mr. Elton’s death was the result of the injuries he received on the occasion of that robbery, as sure as if he had been left on the moor dead at the time. Whoever committed the robbery killed him.”

The bookmaker got up slowly, and then said, “I can’t shape it all out now, this may make a difference; but I’ll hunt that Craft to my dying day, if he attempts to remain in England. You gentlemen feel different on these points from us, perhaps. I thought Mr. Elton was a friend of yours.”

“So he was, and a very great one,” rejoined the Colonel.

“If he had been one of mine, I’d have hung the man who killed him, if he’d been my own brother,” said Mr. Horwich. “Good-by, sir,” and the bookmaker hurried out of the room, leaving Colonel Gunnersley with knit brows and an angry gleam in his dark eyes, for the Colonel was not a man who brooked being dictated to as to his duties in this life.

Mr. Horwich began to be a little confused

about his original scheme; in short, after what the Colonel had told him, he was not sure of what he wanted exactly. If this was true—and it probably was—Howden Craft was virtually a murderer as well as a robber. Even supposing this man was in his power, he began to think he should no longer want him to do Lizzie justice. Better that the girl remained unmarried, than that she should be legally linked to such a precious scoundrel. He would take vengeance on Craft for the wrong he had brought her; but he wanted no more. Better, indeed, that his niece should neither see nor hear of him again. Then Mr. Horwich began to wonder whether he had better see Dawes again before he returned to town. His visit to Doncaster had been a disappointment, and what made it still more aggravating was that he was convinced that his idea was correct, and that both the lawyer and Colonel Gunnersley had far stronger grounds for suspecting Howden Craft than had appeared at the trial. But it was no use; the Colonel wouldn't speak,

and Dawes said he couldn't. Well, he had found out this: it was Colonel Gunnersley's secret that Dawes had refused to disclose, and, finally, Mr. Horwich resolved to try once more if he couldn't wring something out of the attorney. He found Mr. Dawes disengaged, and proceeded at once to give him an account of his interview with Colonel Gunnersley. He told him that the Colonel had made no scruple of owning that he was in possession of evidence against Craft which had not been made public; that he, the Colonel, had expressed his opinion very decidedly as regarded Craft's guilt, and that the Colonel was, no doubt, the person whose secret Mr. Dawes declined to divulge.

"If the Colonel said as much as that, I may as well at once admit he is; but if he did not choose to tell it you himself, I need scarcely say that I shall not."

"Then there's no more to be said," remarked Mr. Horwich. "I'm off to town this afternoon, and must work out this riddle by myself."

You know something down here which would probably assist me considerably; still, if you won't open your mouths, I can't help it, but you may rely upon one thing, with your help or without it, I'll never rest till I've done the worst I can to that scoundrel Craft. As I told Colonel Gunnersley, he may choose to let the murderer of his friend go scot-free, but that's not my temper. The betrayer of my niece shall pay dearly for it if I can make him."

"You are very much in earnest," returned the lawyer, "but as I told you before, if you can only prove that *alibi* a fraud, such vengeance as it is now possible to wreak upon Howden Craft lies within your grasp; and to penetrate that, I assure you Colonel Gunnersley's secret wouldn't help you a bit."

They shook hands, and an hour or two later the bookmaker had said farewell to "The Salutation," and was on his way to London.

"An energetic man," quoth the attorney, "and if he'd been in possession of his present knowledge would have been a valuable co-

operator at the time of the trial. It's too late now, and the truth about that *alibi* will never be discovered."

The racing season is over, and the cream of the shooting pretty well also. Most hosts have shot their covers, and, except either the driving of wild partridges or endeavors to pick up a few snipe, there is not much to be done. A long frost has stopped the hunting and brought Cis Fladbury back to town. That gentleman is rather bored at present, and much put to it as to how to get through his time. He is beginning to remember that he is a Light Dragoon, thinks it just as well that his leave is nearly up, and that a spell of soldiering at Norwich would be a pleasant change just at present. He has struck a vein of bad luck too at the whist table, and reflects that, under the circumstances, the modest points of the regimental rubber would be preferable to the higher stakes at the club. He is brooding moodily over the dulness of things generally, and eat-

ing a solitary dinner at the "Thermopolium," when the next table is suddenly occupied by an old friend who has resigned his military career for an appointment in the London police.

After a long gossip over old times, and inquiries after mutual friends with whom they had been quartered in days of yore, but who were now scattered far and wide over the world, the conversation turns upon the latter's appointment, and it calls to Cis' mind the charge against Craft, and he asks his friend whether he recollects the trial.

"Not at all accurately," replied the other.

"I was out of England at the time, and knew neither Craft nor any of those concerned in the whole business. It was before I got my present appointment, and such things didn't make the impression upon me then that they do now. I fancy it made a great sensation in London."

"I suppose you fellows could reckon up anybody in London?"

"No, indeed," replied the other, laughing.

"Unless you belong, or were suspected to be-

long, to the eriminal classes, they wouldn't have your biography in 'the Yard.' Of course our men know, and it's their duty to know also, all prominent people in London by sight, but such knowledge as you mean is confined to the detective department, and I have nothing to do with that branch. But what is it you want to know?"

"Well, there were some of the witnesses in Craft's case that I should like to know the history of. Do you suppose they could tell me?" said Cis.

"Can't say," rejoined the other. "If they knew anything, I should have thought it would have come out at the time. However, you've only to go down and inquire." And then they began to talk once more on indifferent subjects.

Cis, as we know, had already made up his mind that the two people whose antecedents ought to be inquired into were Clawson and Abednego. As he had told Mr. Horwich, as they did not know where Clawson was, it would

be probably difficult to learn much about him, but he was sure he could find out all there was to know about Mr. Abednego; Cis determined to make a few inquiries into the past of these two worthies. Even of Clawson the police might know something; besides, he might have returned to this country long ago, for all they knew. At Scotland Yard they were very plain with him, referred to their books and looked up the case. "But," said the officer who had been told off to answer his inquiries, "we can hardly be said to have been employed at all in this business. And, moreover, I don't know that we could have been any good to the prosecution if we had. We had nothing against any one of the witnesses. We knew nothing of Clawson; but it struck us that, if we'd got orders to do so, he was the one who would have paid best for reckoning up. His leaving the country before the trial looked as if they were afraid to trust him in the box; while about Mr. Abednego we could have told nothing that was the slightest good. He's

a very clever man; we suspected him then, as we suspect him now, of being the organizer of more than one big robbery and fraud. We think there are a good many of the top sawyers among *our chickens* who could throw an extraordinary light upon Mr. Abednego's past if they could be made to speak. He's a gentleman who dabbles in a great many trades—he's a diamond merchant among others, and we are strongly of opinion that he's the cleverest fence in London, and that he's as clever at organizing a defence as the sharpest attorney who practises in the criminal courts. The most suspicious thing in our eyes about that *alibi* was Mr. Abednego being one of the witnesses; but, with all this, Captain Fladbury, bear in mind we have positively nothing against the man."

Cis thanked the officer and walked out of Scotland Yard more puzzled than ever (the police had not as yet moved out of the old well-known headquarters). Since he had listened to their supposed portrait of Mr. Abednego as

he really was, in contrast with the respectable man of business the world pictured him, he had no doubt whatever that the dinner at the "Falcon" was an ingenious fraud. But how had it been accomplished? That the dinner had taken place there could be no doubt; granting that Fletcher, Brooklyn, and Mr. Abednego had all perjured themselves, it was impossible to believe that a man in Welside's position could have done so. It was not likely that the waiters, the landlord of the "Falcon," and his books, should all testify that such a dinner had taken place if it had not. Let Mr. Abednego be clever as the police gave him credit for, it seemed impossible that he could have concocted such a gigantic lie as this, and induced all these people to swear to it; and yet if this dinner did actually take place, Craft's exculpation was complete. "I wonder whether Horwich has made anything out of Mr. Abednego; whether he knows anything about him. From what the police told me, I should think not; but some of these ring-men who live in town

come across a good many side-lights upon men who have dealings in money; and I have no doubt, among his other avocations, Mr. Abednego lends that at a price. The whole business is beyond me, and the only chance I can see of ever getting at the rights of it is coming across Clawson. If it is a fraud, he was in it, and knows how it was managed. And, as that fellow said at Scotland Yard, it looks a little as if the others were afraid to trust him. His disappearing before the trial was as odd as Craft's disappearance immediately afterward. I wonder if the two met in America. Well, I can do no more, though I really should like to know the answer to the riddle. Horwich must work the thing out for himself now, for next week my country again demands my services, and I shall be quite glad to get back to the old regiment."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FALCON HOTEL.

LIZZIE PENISTONE had heard nothing of her uncle since the night he had quitted her in dudgeon. She knew he was a fierce-tempered, obstinate man when aroused, and she knew that he would never rest until he stood face to face with Howden Craft. She knew that Howden was self-willed and bad to drive, and in her anxiety to prevent a collision between those two she had allowed the fact that she was not really married to escape her. It was too late now; his suspicions once aroused, she knew that her uncle would want ample proof of that marriage before he believed in it. It was too late to retract her admission, and yet she was afraid that she had done more harm by it than by keeping up the fiction that she was lawfully wedded. If her uncle had vowed

that Craft should do her justice by openly acknowledging her as his wife, he would be likely to still more sternly insist upon his making her in reality what she professed to be. She was too proud to become Howden's wife by compulsion. If he had not love enough left for her to make him right her before the world, better that all should be over between them. But she was afraid that it might be within her uncle's power to work Howden harm. She believed that there was a weak joint in his armor, and that, what is more, her uncle had unwittingly blundered upon it. Nothing could be more unfortunate than that he should have discovered that she had assisted for those few days at the "Falcon." It was possible that it might not occur to him to make inquiries there; but he was a sharp man, and though she had never understood it all, she did know that Howden had bidden her never to admit to any one that she had been there at all; that he wished, in short, that nobody should ever know that she had held such a situation. She had thought at

the time that pride had something to say to it, that he did not wish it to be known that his future wife had held what he deemed so derogatory a position.

What might be the result of any such inquiries on the part of Mr. Horwich, she did not exactly know. She would have stopped them if she could; but though powerless to do that, she could at all events go to the "Falcon" and ascertain if her uncle had been there, and what had been the drift of his questions. In pursuance of this idea, Lizzie took the earliest opportunity of paying the hotel a visit, and, entering the bar, at once inquired for Harriet Starr.

"Why," exclaimed one of the presiding goddesses in reply, "if it ain't Miss Clover! Do come in and have a cup of tea. Why, you've never been to see us since that time you came and played at being barmaid for a week. You'll find Harriet inside; it's her turn off."

The bar at the "Falcon" was a good-sized room, being in effect a combination of bar and office, such as is not uncommon in some of the

newly built hotels. It was a popular resort with some of the faster city men, who would drop in there for a glass of sherry and bitters and to pick up the latest doings at Tattersall's or the Victoria Club; for it was a hotel with decidedly sporting characteristics, and there was always a sprinkling of racing-men to be found lounging in front of the spacious counter between four and five. It was, so to speak, the confluence of two streams, the one flowing from Tattersall's eastward, and the other from the Stock Exchange and its purlieus to the west. There were always two or three young ladies in the bar to attend to the requirements of its numerous clientele, whether for immediate refreshment or for the ordering of dinners later on, to say nothing of the reserve staff in the little parlor at the back of the bar.

"I'll come and have a chat," continued the girl, "as soon as I can get away. Harriet will take care of you in the mean time."

Entering the inner room, Lizzie was at once warmly greeted by her cousin.

“It’s not often I get a glimpse of you since I got discontented with the country and took a situation in London. Mother tells me you get out to Willesden and see them all sometimes, but I suppose that, like myself, you’ve not many days to spare?”

“No; and you? You must like your life here, or you wouldn’t have stayed so long. Ah!” continued Lizzie, laughing, “you used to complain at home that you hadn’t enough to do. I fancy from my brief experience you don’t find that the case here?”

“No, indeed,” rejoined the other cheerily. “The trouble is here, that we haven’t time to sit down, but I don’t complain; if we always have our hands full, the proprietor, Mr. Edwards, if you recollect, is very considerate.”

“You look well, Harriet; but tell me, have you seen my uncle here lately?”

“Your uncle!” ejaculated Miss Starr. “Oh, yes, you mean Mr. Horwich. I’d almost forgotten he was your uncle, you know. I don’t

know much of him; he's not one of our regular customers, and only comes here occasionally. No, I don't remember having seen him for some time."

"I want you to do me a favor, Harriet. You recollect the time you wanted a rest, and I volunteered to take your place here for a week?"

The other nodded.

"Now, my uncle either saw me or thought he saw me at that time, and after all these years he wants to make a fuss about it, and vows he'll come down here and inquire whether he was right or wrong about seeing me."

"Good gracious! Why, what business on earth is it of his?"

"None; but if he finds out he's right, he'll begin to talk about it, and that'll make all sorts of unpleasantness. My husband didn't at all like my taking the situation, and would never have allowed me to do it if we hadn't been very hard up at the time."

Lizzie Penistone was firmly believed by her

family to be a wife temporarily separated from her husband, though none of them had ever set eyes upon Clover, who was supposed to have gone to America to seek his fortune.

"Well, I'm sure," replied Miss Starr rather huffily, "there's no necessity for him to be so uppish. Barmaids have married as good as him, I dare say, many a time."

"No, no, I don't mean that. Don't be foolish, Harriet. Of course I know that; but men have their whims. It's only a small thing I ask you to do."

"He shan't get a word out of me even if he does come 'snooping' around," rejoined Miss Starr, who was a good-natured girl, pursing up her lips. "And except Miss Young, whom you must have passed as you came in, we've nobody left in the bar who was here at the time, and I've no doubt she won't say anything if you tell her not. I'll just go out and take her place, and send her in to you, so that you can settle it at once. Promise not to hurry away; the rush of business will be over in half

an hour, and then I'll come back." And with this Harriet Starr left the room and sent Miss Young to entertain her cousin.

This latter young lady had taken a great fancy to Lizzie during her brief sojourn at the "Falcon," and willingly gave the required promise. "Of course I'll never admit you were here, my dear, now you have told me. We all have to stand by each other in this way at times. My home, for instance, is as dull as ditch-water, and I don't trouble it any more than I can help, but it would never do when I told them I could not come and see them on account of press of business, if on coming down here to look for me they were informed that I was walking out with my young man on that particular day. No, we've all our little secrets. I wish there was any chance of your coming back to us. You recollect what a fuss there was about that dinner—that dinner they tried to bounce us out of? I don't mean the gentlemen who were at it; they not only paid for it, but came forward and swore that they ate it.

It all came along of that case of that poor young man."

"Ah, that's it," interrupted Lizzie eagerly. "It was all on account of some dinner that took place while I was here that my uncle's making all this fuss about. He pretends that I met somebody at it that I ought not to have done, and when my Uncle Tom gets a thing into his head he's that obstinate nobody can ever convince him he's wrong. But never mind the dinner. Tell me something about yourself." And Miss Young, whose interest in the dinner had been of the most evanescent character, readily complied, and their talk at once drifted into those topics of conversation congenial to Miss Young's class generally. The perfections of her sweetheart and the doings at the theatre and music-halls were all subjects on which Miss Young delighted to dilate, and when Harriet Starr joined them she found them freely criticising the last popular plays and songs of the day.

After half an hour's more gossip, Lizzie rose

and declared she must be going home; and, having said good-by to her companions, walked away with a sense of great relief, both her cousin and Miss Young standing pledged to preserve strict silence as to her having been employed at the "Falcon," and to give that inquisitive uncle of Miss Clover's no information about dinners of any kind. "What an idea! Did he suppose they were ready to come and have a cutlet in the coffee-room with the first stranger that asked them?" and Miss Starr quite snorted with indignation at the supposition, while Miss Young declared she was not going out of her way to satisfy the curiosity of such a horrid old wretch. Want of appreciation of Miss Young's fascinations may perhaps have had something to say to this unwarranted verdict against Mr. Horwich.

It was with some little difficulty that Colonel Gunnersley refrained from hurling a tremendous malediction at the bookmaker's head upon his last speech. Perhaps the abruptness with

which Mr. Horwich made his exit and the being taken thoroughly aback combined saved the bookmaker from the fierce rebuke which rose to the Colonel's lips a few seconds after he had left the room. That he, Colonel Gunnersley, should have his duty to his dead friend laid down to him by a ——— ring-man! Was there ever such impudence? It was as if one of his late troopers had dictated to him what he ought to do in the emergency of battle. Weakness and amiability formed no part of the Colonel's character. The justice that he dealt out was seldom leavened with mercy, and that he of all men should be taunted with being backward to avenge the death of a friend was incredible. He had not earned that reputation, at all events, in India, "when sabres were swinging and head-pieces ringing;" he didn't know about his own brother, but Howden Craft would have assuredly swung for the results of that robbery had it rested with Colonel Gunnersley. He couldn't prove what he knew; but he was a man pretty staunch to his convictions, and in

such cases much inclined toward Jedwood justice, namely, to hang his man first and try him afterward. He chafed impatiently under Mr. Horwich's gibe. "Yes," he muttered, "only for my promise, I'm not sure even now I couldn't hunt the hound out of the country; but my lips are sealed, and no one yet ever knew George Gunnersley break his word. It's singular that Craft should have had such speedy notice of his uncle's death; for to see whether he had benefited by it was of course his object in coming down to Doncaster. He could have had no ulterior motive, he couldn't dare to have, with such a suspicion resting on him; he never could dream of Emily Elton being anything to him now, and I'm much surprised she received him at all on his visit down here."

Now here the Colonel made a very considerable mistake. Because he and a few of his cronies round about Doncaster had adhered to their original opinion that Craft was guilty, they thought that belief must exist among

all who knew him. Emily Elton, like others, had always held him innocent of the crime, and the bias of public opinion at the time of the trial had been decidedly in favor of the prisoner, while after his acquittal it had been by no manner of means what it had pleased Howden Craft to represent it in his letters to his cousin. What it was now Howden had as yet taken no pains to ascertain, further than that a strong prejudice existed against him among his uncle's old friends. He had never been popular around St. Katherine's; and those who knew him and he had come across during his visit to Doncaster, although recognizing him politely, were undoubtedly cold in their manner. The smirch of that charge still evidently rested on his name in their eyes. As for the world generally, it was only here and there that his name lingered in its memory, nor was it likely that a sensational trial that happened a good four years ago should be still alluded to in conversation. Howden Craft no doubt had wanted an excuse for going abroad

at the time; his debts made that imperative, and the injustice of the world afforded an excellent excuse for so doing.

Colonel Gunnersley was more put out with Mr. Horwich's visit than he would have liked to own. The strong feelings of indignation that had swayed him at the time of the robbery, and which had been partially revived by the premature death of John Elton, were once more aroused to their highest pitch. He was angry to think that any one should have taken up the task which he had abandoned, and set himself to hunt down the assailant of his old friend; and he was still more angry that his promise prevented his giving what assistance he could to the attempt. He should be curious to know if anything came of it, and thought it was very doubtful if Mr. Horwich would communicate any more with him upon the subject. However, he could write to that worthy if he chose; he was one of the leading magnates of the ring; the Victoria Club would doubtless find him, and, if not, Cis Fladbury would be

sure to know where he was to be found. "By the way," muttered the Colonel, with a grim smile, "how dare Master Cis send such an impertinent villain with that rigmarole story to me? I owe him one for that. I'll ask him here and treat him as I used to in the old times when I sent for him to the orderly-room. I'll give him a wiggling, and stop his claret for three days."

Once more back in London, and Mr. Horwich set himself to his task with renewed energy. He would try what he could make out of Mr. Abednego, although he had very little hope of making out anything about him, either one way or the other. He was a puzzle, he always had been a puzzle; he had a considerable acquaintance among racing-men, all of whom seemed to have a high idea of his astuteness, but knew no more about him than Mr. Horwich. He sometimes had a commission to throw into the turf market, and those to whom he might confide it were always delighted to do his bidding,

as Mr. Abednego made very few mistakes about such things: but he neither owned race-horses nor did he himself belong to the betting-ring. Mr. Horwich was as yet ignorant of the suspicions Scotland Yard entertained about him. As regards Clawson, he didn't know even how to begin; advertising for him, if the thing was a fraud, would simply be to arouse the suspicions of all who were concerned in it, while to appeal to any detective to discover a man of whom you can only tell him the name, and whom you hadn't heard of for four years, seemed absurd. No, there was only one thing for it; he hadn't made much out of his visit to the "Salutation," he must try what he could do with the "Falcon." And with this resolve, Mr. Horwich betook himself to that resort a little before the fashionable hour. But it was in vain that he poured libations down his throat, in vain that he assumed an air of gallantry, in vain he made the most complimentary speeches; the nymphs behind the bar had either entered their situations long after the

dinner he wished to inquire about had taken place, or they were as unbending in their manner as Benedictine nuns. Miss Starr admitted that she had been engaged there, but that she had been ill at the time he referred to and gone home for change of air to her own people. Miss Young, with extreme superciliousness, informed him that she had nothing to do with dinners, he had better inquire in the coffee-room, the waiters there might remember something about it; and one and all declared stoutly that no Miss Penistone had ever been engaged there in their time, which was perfectly true as regards them all, with the exception of Harriet Starr, for she only knew this was her cousin's maiden name. Still, Mr. Horwich's inquiries told Miss Young that Mrs. Clover and Miss Penistone were one and the same person.

dicted in days gone by to pastimes now voted to savor too much of the games of the Coliseum. The Norwich school was held in high repute in the palmy days of prize-fighting, when it took

CHAPTER IX.

COLONEL AND MRS. GUNNERSLEY.

CIS FLADBURY, having rejoined his regiment in compliance with the usual requirements of the service, was now comfortably ensconced at Norwich. He soon found it, as his brethren of the Twelfth assured him he would, a very pleasant quarter. Capital of one of the most sporting counties in England, if you *can* shoot—I don't mean merely let off a gun—and hold your own fairly with hounds, you will find plenty of pleasant houses open to you. They do know something about the killing of partridges in Norfolk, or, for the matter of that, pheasants either, and though the hunting may not be quite up to Leicestershire, yet you need to be a "customer," to hold your own in the front rank with Mr. Villebois and the West Norfolk. Yes, a very sporting county, ad-

dicted in days gone by to pastimes now voted to savor too much of the games of the Coliseum. The Norwich school was held in high repute in the palmy days of prize-fighting, when it took rather more than ten minutes to win a first-class battle, and the combatants bore considerably severer evidence of the fray than a black eye. Many of its young men were aspirants for London honors, and attained high repute in the metropolitan ring. Game fowl were as plentiful as woodcocks, and many a main of cocks was fought within a short distance of the cathedral; and though these sports of that merry olden time, when we weren't, after all, so very far removed in our tastes from the days when they gave prisoners to the lions, are now things of the past, yet the shooting and hunting are still of the best. The duty of a regiment in a country town can rarely fall very heavily, and neither Cis nor his comrades found any difficulty in snatching a day or two to come over and dine and shoot here, or to send on a horse and hunt there, and, in short, the

officers of the Twelfth Lancers could only be described as being billeted all over the county, with just a residue left in the capital to take the horses out every morning and attend to any other trifling details there might be. As an exuberant subaltern described it, "just like perpetual leave, only more so."

This was an exceedingly pleasant life, and no one was enjoying it more than Cis Fladbury. The long frosts were gone, and if the going was a little deep, they were having capital sport with the hounds now; while as for game, no matter what sort of a year it may be elsewhere, there are always birds in Norfolk. Cis had been asked to stay in a house some little distance from Norwich for three days' shooting, and having sent his servant over with his things, had ridden there himself after a day's hunting.

He arrived there so late that he had only time to hurry to his room and dress. When he entered the drawing-room, the party were just pairing off for dinner. As he shook hands

with his hostess, she said, "Just in time, Captain Fladbury; take Miss Elton in, and you can tell us all about your sport when you've had your soup. He's no doubt starving, Emily, and a hungry man is a silent creature."

"Captain Fladbury and I are old acquaintances," replied the girl, smiling, "although we haven't met for some time."

Although the meeting was unexpected, and Cis had never set foot in St. Katherine's since that last fatal Doncaster gathering, yet he had met Miss Elton occasionally at other houses in the vicinity. He admired her exceedingly, and thought her a very nice girl to boot; but in consequence of that resolution she had made of never leaving her father for more than the day, he had not seen very much of her. So conscious was he of his weakness concerning Miss Elton, that he had gone so far upon one occasion as to confide to Mrs. Gunnersley, when in Yorkshire, after having been Emily's cavalier at dinner, "Quite as well, you know, for some of us she's made that ridiculous rule.

I'm sure I, for one, should be getting awful sweet if I saw much more of her."

"Well, that wouldn't do you any harm," quoth the lady. "It's generally considered a pleasant state to be in."

"No," replied Cis placidly, "but I might lose my head and ask her to marry me."

"Yes," retorted Mrs. Gunnersley, "and she might keep hers and say she wouldn't."

"And then I should be miserable. Don't misunderstand me, Mrs. Gunnersley; I'm in earnest, downright earnest. Only I know the grapes are beyond my reach I should be a pretty bad case, I can tell you."

"Well," replied the lady, laughing, "I've been the wife of a Lancer all my life, I've been where soldiers mostly congregate, and seen them in all their phases, but a Light Dragoon afflicted with modesty I never saw till now."

Neither of the twain ever forgot this conversation, and Mrs. Gunnersley inwardly vowed that if ever she got the chance she would do

her best to bring that match about. Cis Fladbury was not only a special favorite both with her and the Colonel, but she knew him to be a true and loyal gentleman as ever trod shoe-leather; but there was one thing she did not know, and that was the cause of this modesty. Cis Fladbury was in possession of a very good property when he joined the Lancers, and though he had by no means run through it, yet he was an extravagant man, and had dipped it a good bit. He bet heavily on racing at all times, and was quite aware that John Elton knew it, and thought it very unlikely that with that knowledge he would consent to his marrying his daughter.

Cis and his partner chatted away pleasantly enough, but that they should refer to old days before long was only natural; and then Cis, considerably to his disgust, found that the young lady was not only firmly convinced of Howden Craft's innocence, but, still worse, betrayed far too strong a cousinly affection for him, and all her interest concerning him seemed

far greater in Fladbury's eyes than there was any occasion for. And it was strange how the idea that there had been something serious between the two seemed to convince him of Howden's guilt in the matter of the robbery. Like most of us, he had been cool enough until his feelings were concerned, insisting rigidly upon facts, in a manner that would have delighted Mr. Dawes; but now that he was inoculated with jealousy he was prepared to believe in any atrocity man or woman might think fit to utter against Craft. Those three days slipped pleasantly away, and such progress did Fladbury make in Emily Elton's good graces that significant glances were exchanged between the ladies of the party upon more than one occasion, as they witnessed the flirtation between the pair. As he bade farewell, Cis expressed a hope that he might see Miss Elton again before she left that part of the country.

"I am afraid not," replied the young lady. "I've already made an unconscionable visit,

and must go back to my own country in the course of next week."

"Then I must only hope that the Fates will carry me to Yorkshire," rejoined Cis, as, having pressed her hand, he jumped into the dog-cart, and took off his hat to the little party assembled on the steps to bid him good-bye.

The Fates were more propitious to Fladbury than he had any reason to expect; for when, having regained the barracks, he reached his room, lying on his table he found the invitation with which, as we know, Colonel Gunnersley had threatened him. The Colonel's letter was cordial in the extreme. He pressed him strongly to come and pay him a visit, saying he wanted to hear all the news and gossip of the old regiment; and further declared that Cis was bound to come, if it was only to make amends for having let that malignant book-maker loose upon him, with a further assurance that the invitation was strenuously indorsed by Mrs. Gunnersley, who threatened all

sorts of pains and penalties if he failed to put in an appearance.

“Go?” muttered Cis as he read this. “Go? I should rather think I would. It’s just the very chance I want, if I can only manage the leave. I’ll go at once to the chief and have a talk about it.”

After a short conference with his colonel, Fladbury was successful in obtaining the leave he wanted; and the following week saw him on his way to Haneton, speculating considerably as to whether he was likely to come across Miss Elton during his brief Yorkshire visit. It was something like two years ago that he had made that confidence to Mrs. Gunnersley; and though he had met her several times since, she had never alluded to it. Other engagements had compelled him to decline two invitations to Haneton during that time, and Cis knew very well that those refusals might be falsely interpreted. He knew that Mrs. Gunnersley would say, like any other woman, there are no engagements a man can’t break if he cares

for a girl in earnest, and thinks there's a fair chance of meeting her. She knew perfectly well when to let well alone; but as she had scoffed at the idea of modesty in a Light Dragoon, so would she have been merciless in her raillery of a half-hearted one; and yet if he had hesitated to ask this girl's hand from her father, wouldn't it be meaner to woo her now that he was no longer there to protect her, and she had come into her inheritance? However, the *laissez aller* was a rather favorite doctrine of Fladbury's, and he determined to adhere to it in this instance—a very comfortable, though indolent resolve, that of waiting the course of events instead of attempting to direct them.

Cis was warmly welcomed at Haneton, although his hostess said merrily, "I've got not merely a crow to pick with you, Captain Fladbury, but a whole rookery. Nothing but your being under arrest is an excuse for your not coming here when I want you; and we've had such pleasant people with us on both occa-

sions, it was too provoking you couldn't manage to come to us."

"Don't I know that?" replied Cis. "Do you suppose, Mrs. Gunnersley, that those refusals were not written, as the poet has it, 'in silence and tears?'"

"Yes, I do," rejoined the lady, laughing; "and now I must run away and dress. But don't suppose the scolding is forgotten; it's only postponed."

"Deuced glad to see you, Fladbury," quoth his old chief; "haven't seen any of the old regiment since I lunched on their coach at Ascot and pronounced the champagne quite up to the old form, although their team was rather a scratch one. However, run away. Hughes will show you your room, and we'll talk over the bygone days in the smoking-room later on."

When Cis came down to dinner, he experienced a slight sense of disappointment. He expected to find the house full of company, and, the wish being father to the thought,

had hoped to find Miss Elton among them; on the contrary, he found they were only a *partie carée*, a Mr. Dawes, whom he never met before, being the only guest.

“You see your punishment,” said his hostess, laughing, as he led her in to dinner. “You wouldn’t meet the pleasant people when we had them, and now the pleasant people won’t meet you.”

Although the conversation, as was only natural, turned a good deal upon local topics, yet the Gunnersleys were people of the world, and had something to say about most of the affairs of the day. Mr. Dawes, too, could hold his own on most subjects, so the conversation sped smoothly and gayly enough. In the course of it Cis took an opportunity of mentioning his meeting with Miss Elton in Norfolk, but that lady merely replied that she had heard Emily had gone away to stay with some friends for a short time, but volunteered no information about when she was expected back, and in fact, made no attempt to follow his

lead in any way. No sooner had Mrs. Gunnersley left them to their claret than the Colonel began to laughingly upbraid Cis upon having let loose upon him that vengeful bookmaker. A little astonished, Cis glanced significantly at Dawes. He expected to be questioned pretty closely about Mr. Horwich when they got to the smoking-room, but was rather surprised at the opening of the subject before a stranger. The Colonel at once replied to his look, and said:

“You needn't be afraid about talking the matter over before Dawes; he knows quite as much about it as either of us, and had more than one long talk with Mr. Horwich on the subject. One thing puzzles us: how was it Mr. Horwich came to you about the business?”

“Well, I'm blessed if I know,” replied Cis. “You see, I met him in a non-professional way at the ordinary at the George Hotel, Nottingham. We had given the ring such a slating as, I regret to say, I haven't assisted at since that last memorable week I spent at

John Elton's. Perhaps it was this recalled it to his recollection, but he told me then that he had heard Howden Craft was in England, and asked me if I knew where he was. We got chatting about the case, and he asked me to help him."

"I see," said Gunnersley, "but in what way did he ask you to do that?"

"In pretty much the way I've done. I found out that Craft was or had been at Doncaster, and I gave him that letter of introduction to you."

"And that's all?" said the Colonel, with a shade of disappointment.

"Yes, I fancy that's about all," replied Cis, "but my curiosity was roused, and I reread the case. As long as that *alibi* holds good, it doesn't look as if there could be a doubt of Craft's innocence."

"Have you seen Mr. Horwich lately?" asked the lawyer, "because he's very far from being of your opinion."

"I haven't seen him since Nottingham,"

replied Cis, "but I know that is so. I have heard from him once or twice; but, if he has discovered anything, he keeps it to himself."

"But your real opinion, mind, agrees with Mr. Horwich's," exclaimed the Colonel eagerly.

"Does it?" said Cis languidly.

"Yes," continued the Colonel, "you're quite right. Till that evidence is disproved, it is wrong to regard Howden Craft as guilty; but, like Horwich, I feel that he is, and that *alibi* is all a fraud."

"Well, to tell you the truth, between ourselves, that's exactly what I do feel about it."

"Would you mind telling us, Captain Fladbury, what produced this change of opinion on your part in the face of all the evidence?" inquired Mr. Dawes suavely, and who had been watching Cis' face sharply during the whole conversation.

"The opinion of the Scotland Yard people about one of the *gentlemen* present at that dinner," rejoined the Captain, with a very strong

inflection on the word "gentlemen." "They told me they had nothing against Mr. Abednego, but that they suspected him of a good deal, and the mere fact of his being one of the witnesses to that *alibi* made them have grave doubts as to its genuineness."

"Hardly sufficient to change your opinion on, Captain Fladbury," remarked [the lawyer, laughing. "Scotland Yard only has its suspicions, and we don't hang men on suspicion nowadays. Scotland Yard is within its right, for Dogberry lays it down, you know, 'You may suspect him by virtue of your office.'"]

"And you've learned nothing more?" said the Colonel in an aggrieved tone.

"Nothing," rejoined Cis, rising. "Nor, unless Mr. Abednego chooses to speak out, do I suppose we ever shall."

"No more wine, thank you," said Dawes, as he followed Fladbury's example. "But why Mr. Abednego? Any one of the others would do as well, and such a clever rogue as

he is assumed to be would probably be the last man to let the cat out of the bag." And with that the three gentlemen proceeded to join Mrs. Gunnersley.

When Dawes, who is not staying in the house, took his departure, the Colonel and his guest adjourned to the smoking-room, where they had a long yarn over their cigars. The talk was chiefly confined to regimental gossip, and the trial of Howden Craft was no further alluded to. When Cra found himself in his own room, he was sensible of feeling discontented, and feeling rather ashamed of himself for being so.

"Hang it," he argued, "it will be awfully dull. What shall I do? I'll ask the boys here when they'd nobody staying with them? Of course, the Colonel's an awfully good fellow, and his wife's a better, and I'm awfully fond of them both, and the cigar and tobacco is world be as well, and such a clever fellow as

CHAPTER X.

EMILY LOSES HER TEMPER.

WHEN Dawes, who is not staying in the house, took his departure, the Colonel and his guest adjourned to the smoking-room, where they had a long yarn over their cigars. The talk was chiefly confined to regimental gossip, and the trial of Howden Craft was no further alluded to. When Cis found himself in his own room, he was sensible of feeling discontented, and feeling rather ashamed of himself for being so.

“Hang it!” he argued, “it will be awfully dull. What made them ask me down here when they’d nobody staying with them? Of course, the Colonel’s an awfully good fellow, and his wife’s a better, and I’m awfully fond of them both, and the claret and tobacco is

unexceptionable. An evening of it is all very well, but I can't keep going over the regimental chaff with old Gunnersley for a week. It will be dull, uncommon dull."

Could this confidence only have been whispered into Mrs. Gunnersley's ear, I fancy that lady would have replied sweetly, "Will it? I'm so sorry," and then have burst into uncontrollable laughter.

Then he wondered how it was that Mr. Dawes had been asked to dinner, for in the smoking-room Gunnersley had explained to him that Dawes was a solicitor. Thinking it over, it struck him as odd that the sole guest asked to meet him should have been an attorney, and, from the turn the conversation had taken after dinner, it was pretty evident he had been asked on purpose to discuss this case of Howden Craft's. He knew how energetic and hot the Colonel had been about it at the time, but what could be his object in stirring up the matter again after all these years? He very imperfectly comprehended Horwich's mo-

tive, still he did know that revenge for some real or imaginary wrong was at the bottom of the bookmaker's animus, and then, what had he himself to do with it? The case had an extraordinary fascination about it. Granted that the idea once took possession of you that the whole thing was a deception, and you became curious to know how the trick was done, and then that last remark of Mr. Dawes' just before they left the dining-room, suddenly occurred to him, that, as far as the solution of the puzzle went, the confession of any one of those concerned was as good as any other. The attorney had pointed out that it was very improbable that a crafty old rogue like Mr. Abednego would ever be induced to confess. To break a chain, you select its weakest link. The same would apply to a chain of evidence. He had always said he would reckon up Wel-side; he had never taken the trouble to do it, but he would. He would make that gentleman's acquaintance, and that would probably settle the question. Stupid of him not to think

of it before. Whatever Welside had sworn, he had sworn honestly to, Cis felt pretty sure. Yes, if Welside was quite clear about that dinner, it was no use bothering their heads any more; and then Cis became oblivious to all things mundane, and sank into deep and untroubled slumbers.

However, the next day, Fladbury found that he was by no means to be the sole guest. In the course of the morning, his host informed him that several people he knew would arrive in the afternoon to spend a few days at Hane-ton, and that Miss Elton was to be one of them. It changed the aspect of affairs, as far as he was concerned, considerably. Between gossiping with the Colonel and driving with his wife, he found the day slip away pleasantly enough, and when he joined Mrs. Gunnersley's tea-table, after their drive, he found not only several old acquaintances, but Emily Elton among them. The young lady was undoubtedly a little surprised to see him; she smiled as she shook hands, and said, "You

never told me, Captain Fladbury, that you were coming into our part of the world. I thought you were too busy taking care of your horses and soldiers and things to get away from Norwich. You told us all, when you said good-by last week, that you couldn't be spared for another hour from your military duties."

"Quite true, Miss Elton. This, you see, is part of them. Gunnersley, you see, is our old colonel; and if I didn't report to him confidentially every now and then about the state of the regiment, there's no saying what might happen."

The young lady laughed merrily, and then the pair dropped into a pleasant chat about their friends in Norfolk, etc., while Mrs. Gunnersley secretly congratulated herself on the success of her diplomacy, little thinking of the storm that was about to burst and shatter the web she was so carefully weaving. All that evening things went along gayly, and that lady came to the conclusion that she had nothing to

do but to let well alone. If Cis and Emily Elton did not come to an understanding, without her assistance, in the course of this visit, she washed her hands of them forever. But in the pleasantest parties there is apt to be some unfortunate wight who is destined to make the unlucky remark that, to put it mildly, mars the harmony of the gathering. He is not a man given to speaking maliciously, nor is he notorious for always saying the wrong thing at the wrong time; but upon the one occasion he seems to have brought the apple of discord in his pocket; but though he may be ready to bite his tongue out on discovery of his *mat à propos* remark, there is no recalling the word spoken. In the course of conversation, a gentleman from a distant part of the country, and who had pretty well forgotten all about the robbery of John Elton, happened to say:

“I met a man whom I used to know racing some years ago, but whom I haven't seen for a long time, in the train the other day. I

fancy he was pretty well known around here—
Howden Craft.”

“Better known than liked,” said Gunnersley
sententiously.

Emily Elton’s face flushed, and her eyes
flashed, as she said in perfectly clear tones:

“You have no right to say that, Colonel
Gunnersley. My cousin Howden has many
warm and true friends round Doncaster. He
was infamously traduced, and refuted the
shameful slander, as you well know. You
never liked him, and took part against him at
the time, but I’ve always given you credit for
regretting your mistake.”

This was like a shell into the midst of the
whole party. Even those who recollected all
about the case of Howden Craft were astonished
at the warmth with which Miss Elton cham-
pioned her cousin; but she was a high-spirited
girl, thoroughly convinced of his innocence,
and thought the pretending to believe him still
guilty of a crime of which he had been honor-
ably acquitted was cruelly unjust. Her face

flushed again as she became conscious of the pause in the conversation that followed her indignant remonstrance.

"What an old fool I am!" thought the Colonel; "but who could have supposed the girl had such a devil of a temper?"

"Too late, too late," thought Mrs. Gunnersley. "Oh, Cis Fladbury, why didn't you ask her a year ago? Now she's entangled with that scamp of a cousin."

The remainder of the party put much the same construction upon Miss Elton's speech that Mrs. Gunnersley did. She would hardly have stood up for her cousin so hotly, unless they had been something more than cousins. Emily was the first to break the silence.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Gunnersley," she said, "if I've spoken too strongly, but I do so hate injustice." And she flashed an indignant glance at the Colonel which said very plainly that, whatever she might do to his wife, she apologized not an iota to him.

"I'm sorry I offended you, Emily," said the

Colonel, "but I have said nothing against your cousin, except that he was not popular in the neighborhood; and I don't think that he was."

"Yes, the words sound harmless enough," said the young lady, disdainfully, "but you know what you meant."

The subject here dropped; but the results of the conversation, as is often the case, did not, and the impression that a particularly good understanding existed between the cousins was more or less stamped upon the minds of all present.

"This won't do, Lou," said the Colonel, as he wandered into his wife's room just before going down to dinner; "this must be put a stop to. You must make her understand what a scoundrel he is. By George, you can't paint him too bad. The fellow's capable of anything."

"You old goose," rejoined his wife, laughing, "don't you know that the more you run Howden Craft down, the more determined she would be to marry him? No, no, leave it all

to me; and mind, don't let the name of her cousin pass your lips."

"What do you mean that I am to look quietly on, while that scamp carries off the nicest girl in the county?"

"Leave it to me," replied his wife.

"Leave it to you? Yes, but what are you going to do?"

"Treat it as the homeopaths do," rejoined the lady. "Kill one poison by the aid of another;" and leaving the Colonel considerably mystified by this speech, Mrs. Gunnersley tripped downstairs to dinner.

But she knew it was high time she intervened now. She was quite aware that the meshes of her scheme were broken, that Cis Fladbury was so stupid that he would be all for raising the siege when he ought to press the citadel hardest. "I must catch him alone, and tell him that if he don't win Emily Elton, he's not fit to command a troop in the dear old Twelfth, and he ought to be ashamed of himself."

Mrs. Gunnersley had taken a very correct view of the situation. "I suppose it's too late," thought Cis; "there can't be a doubt about it now, she's engaged to that fellow, Craft. We get on very well, and are very good friends; but the minute I go too far, the minute I want to be something more, I shall be sent about my business. There's one thing, though, I will do: I will do my very best to find out the truth about that *alibi*. If Craft is innocent, I've no more to say; but if I can prove him guilty, I have a right to, at all events, let her marry him with her eyes opened. In consequence of her father's recent death, she can't marry him just yet; so that gives one some little time."

But the Fates positively refused to favor Mrs. Gunnersley's machinations. Although she managed to have a quiet *tête-à-tête* with Cis in the course of the evening, yet she found him somewhat refractory and difficult to persuade that any further prosecution of his suit at present could possibly be attended with success.

Emily Elton, too, was quite aware that she had placed herself in an awkward situation by her warm defence of her cousin. She could see how the rest of the party had read her interference, and she was certainly not desirous that a rumor of that kind should get about. She liked her cousin, believed in his innocence, and thought he had been hardly dealt with; but she certainly so far had not even a thought of any deeper feeling concerning him. It was not so easy to set this matter right; she could not ostentatiously disavow an engagement with a man who, she was obliged to confess, had never attempted to exceed the bounds of cousinly intimacy. She was quite as dissatisfied with the turn things had taken as Mrs. Gunnersley, and noticed keenly that Fladbury tacitly avoided her the whole evening, and she had found that gentleman's attentions of late more pleasant than she would care to own. But when she came down to breakfast the next morning, she found the situation still further complicated. Among her letters was one

from Howden Craft, saying that he should be in Doncaster that afternoon, he hoped in time to walk over to St. Katherine's and have a cup of tea with her.

"How very provoking his coming this week," was her first thought. "What am I to do about it?" And her first impulse was to say nothing about it, but keep her cousin's arrival to herself. Then it flashed through her mind that Howden was well known by sight to half the people in Doncaster, and it was very probable some of the party might go into the town in the course of the day, and that in any case the news of Howden's presence would not be long before it came out to Haneton. She resolved to take the bull by the horns, and, turning to her hostess, said audibly, and with just a touch of defiance in her tone:

"Another confirmation of the old proverb, Mrs. Gunnersley. We were talking yesterday of my cousin Howden. I have got a letter from him to say that he's coming down to Doncaster again for two or three days. I don't

suppose he'll stay long, but I shall hope to get a glimpse of him while he is here."

A chilling silence followed this speech. After yesterday's passage of arms between herself and the Colonel, it was not likely that any of the rest of the party would venture a remark on such a delicate subject. Mrs. Gunnersley, who was as hospitable a lady as was ever at the head of a household, knew that, out of compliment to Emily, she ought to express a wish at least to see Mr. Craft to dinner that evening, and take measures accordingly. But the Colonel had vowed, many a time and oft, that Howden Craft should never cross his threshold again. All she could do, therefore, was to acknowledge Emily's news with a smile.

"No doubt you will manage that, but you can hardly expect him to stay long. Doncaster is not a very lively place, except in the race-week."

"He's only coming down to see a few old friends, myself I hope among the number," rejoined Miss Elton, slightly emphasizing the word "friends."

Mrs. Gunnersley made no reply. What was

to be done? In truth she could think of nothing. She could do pretty well what she liked with the Colonel in the main, but she knew where to stop, and she dared not ask Howden Craft to Haneton even had she wished it. "That the wretch should ever have turned up again was bad enough," she explained to a *confidante* some months afterward, "but that he should have turned up that week of all others was enough to make any woman swear; and as for Emily, I could have shook her." But the final blow was still to come; and when Miss Elton in the course of the morning announced that she must return home in the afternoon, and sent word for the carriage to come for her, Mrs. Gunnersley's discomfiture was complete. The checkmate was very prettily put, and quite unanswerable.

"I've so few relations, you know, dear Mrs. Gunnersley, that I can't afford to cut one of the few cousins I possess. With the Colonel's prejudices, it is hardly possible for you to ask Howden here, as I know you would like, and so, you see, I *must* go home."

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRST RIFT.

THAT Mr. Horwich was baffled there was no doubt, but he by no means abandoned his determination to solve the mystery of that dinner on that account. He had not expected to find his task an easy one. He had been shrewd enough to see, up at Doncaster, that whatever Dawes and Colonel Gunnersley might know, they would render him no assistance until he was in a fair way to solve the problem for himself. "They have no intention of pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for me. No; they're quite willing to join in the feast when it's done, and, for reasons of their own, make as big a thing of it as possible. I've hit the right nail on the head, I know. Whether those two girls in the bar who admit they were there at the time of the dinner can't tell or won't tell

whether Lizzie was engaged there at the same time, I don't know; and as for the dinner, it's possible they might forget all about that: but don't tell me that if a girl like my niece, who is just a cut above themselves, had been engaged for a short time in the bar they wouldn't recollect it. They'd reckon her up at the time to the color of her neck-ribbon. Not likely they'd forget her. They're a sassy, uppish pair, and have made up their minds they won't remember. Well, I must try somewhere else. The story of that blessed *alibi* has got to be dug out here. As for Mr. Abednego, what's the use of the Captain writing me all this rigmarole about what the police think of him? He's too deep for them; it ain't likely he's going to be turned inside out by the likes of me. But I've not done with that chap Craft yet, and never shall have as long as we live in the same country. There ain't room for us both here, and he's got to go. Now let's have another look at the old trial; now to look out the witnesses at the 'Falcon,' and see who's

the likeliest to make inquiries of. Here's the evidence of the waiters; well, they don't seem to be of much account, both of them stupid, and the head fellow seems to have been a bit obstinate and rather cantankerous as well. Ah, here we have it. Edwards, the manager. What an old fool I am! Why couldn't I think of him before? I dare say he could tell me if he had a Miss Penistone in his employ at that time. Being called to give evidence on the trial would impress the whole thing on his mind. A sharp fellow, too, to look at, though I've never had any talk with him. Well, I'll just drop down this afternoon and see what I can make of him."

Accordingly Mr. Horwich presented himself at the bar of the "Falcon," at the hour when it was most thronged, and without troubling either Miss Starr or Miss Young, though he saw them, picked up a disengaged waiter, and sent him off with a request to his master for a few minutes' conversation. That functionary speedily returned and ushered the bookmaker

into Mr. Edwards' own room. Although he had a mere nodding acquaintance, the manager knew Mr. Horwich's name and calling perfectly well, and, offering his visitor a chair, said:

"And now, Mr. Horwich, what can I do for you? You haven't come to me about a dinner, I suppose? Because I leave all that to my cook. I pay him a large salary, and he stays no longer than he gives satisfaction."

"No, no," replied the other, "I don't want to see the cook, and yet in a way I have come to speak about a dinner. You may remember the trial of a Mr. Howden Craft for highway robbery?"

"Perfectly," replied the manager. "I've not only an excellent memory, but was deeply interested in the case. Why, the dinner that got him off was given at this very house."

"Just so," said Mr. Horwich. "I mention it to call to your mind a particular date. That dinner was given on the Saturday of the Doncaster week, '87."

“Exactly,” said Edwards, “and I have my books to corroborate my memory. What about it?”

“What I particularly want to ask you is whether you had a Miss Penistone in your employment at that time?”

“I must really ask you in what capacity?” rejoined the manager, laughing. “You see, we’ve a good many young women employed about a house of this size, and chambermaids and kitchenmaids are all young ladies now.”

“The Miss Penistone I am inquiring about was in the bar or office.”

“Yes, I can tell you that. I’ll just look at the books, but I’m pretty sure I never had anybody of that name employed here. No, it’s as I thought; there was no Miss Penistone engaged in the bar at the time.”

“You couldn’t possibly have been mistaken, I suppose?” said the bookmaker.

“No; and if my memory played me false, this would keep me straight. You see, when I found myself subpoenaed as a witness for the

prisoner, and discovered what was the line of defence, I naturally wished to give all the assistance in my power. Personally I knew nothing about him; but it was quite clear that if Mr. Craft dined in my house on the 17th, at seven o'clock, he couldn't have committed the robbery with which he was charged on the same afternoon; and that was a point which of course my people could settle, and therefore I made a mem. of the names of the waiters employed that week, and also of the names of the young ladies employed in the bar or office. Here are the girls," and he handed the book to Mr. Horwich.

The latter ran his eye rapidly over the list. "Misses Young, Starr, Jackson, Wray."

"They called the waiters," continued Edwards, "but they never troubled themselves about the young ladies. The case dried up altogether at the finish, and the prosecution seemed so astounded at the strength of the defence that they didn't care to hear all the people they'd subpoenaed. Their case seemed

wretchedly weak, and it was said never ought to have been brought into court."

"Well, I'm beat," at length exclaimed the bookmaker. "I've known Miss Penistone since she was a child, and I can swear I caught sight of her in the bar that week. It would be on the Monday, for I was on my way to catch the train to Doncaster, and ran in here for a drink. I should have spoken to her, only I was pressed for time. Would you mind telling me when you wrote this memorandum? When were you subpœnaed?"

"As soon as Mr. Craft was committed for trial."

"That would be some days after the Doncaster week?"

"Yes, probably a fortnight; but bear in mind, out of these four young ladies Miss Young and Miss Starr are the only two who were with me then."

"And they both swear that they've never known a Miss Penistone in the bar or out of it. I know, because I've asked them; and I know

they're lying because my eyesight's perfectly good and I saw her."

"Come, come, Mr. Horwich," replied Edwards, "this is not quite fair. I don't know what your object can be in making this inquiry, but I certainly see no object they can have in not telling the truth."

The bookmaker made no reply, but a sort of blind instinct made him cling to the belief that he was on the very verge of the discovery he desired. And yet how was he to proceed next? He remained for a minute lost in thought, and then said:

"That your young ladies don't always speak the truth, Mr. Edwards, I'll just prove to you. You say positively, and your memorandum confirms it, that those were the four girls who did the work of the bar and office that week. Now Miss Starr told me herself that, in consequence of being in ill health, she went home for change of air, and was there during that time."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the manager,

starting to his feet, "I never thought of it till this moment. I remember she complained of being unwell, and I asked if I would mind her cousin taking her place for a few days, so that she might get a little rest and change of air."

"Ah!" said Mr. Horwich, "and that cousin's name was——"

"Ah! I am afraid I can't recollect, but I don't somehow think it was Penistone."

It was discouraging, provoking, but Mr. Horwich was perfectly sure now that he was on the right track. But he still didn't see quite how he was to prove his point. Whether he could discover her reason for being at the "Falcon" had yet to be seen, but obviously the first thing to be quite clear about was that she was there. So far both she and her companions were evidently determined to deny that fact, to commence with.

"No chance of your remembering the name?" he remarked at last.

"I am afraid not," replied the manager. "And now I think it over I am not quite sure that

I ever knew it. Miss Starr had been with me something like three years then, and I placed perfect confidence in her. I was quite willing to give her a few days' holiday, and don't think I even bothered myself about the name of the girl who took her place, but I do recollect clearly that she said it was her cousin. But we'll very soon settle the thing." And having rung the bell, he desired the servant who answered it to ask Miss Starr to step into his room. That young lady speedily appeared, and no sooner saw that Mr. Horwich was closeted with her master than she knew that Lizzie's secret could be kept no longer. Mr. Edwards at once asked her what was the name of the cousin who had taken her place when she had been ill four years ago. If the book-maker had ever known that Harriet Starr was a cousin of Lizzie's, it had entirely escaped his memory. She was no relation of his, and one can hardly be expected to remember the cousins of nieces and nephews; but Harriet had known him very well by sight for some years, and had

even occasionally exchanged a few words with him, though she had never referred to her relationship with Lizzie. If only her master had asked if it was a Miss Penistone that had taken her place at that time, she was prepared to deny it, saying as a salve to her conscience that Lizzie's real name, as she honestly supposed, was Mrs. Clover. But her cousin. She saw that this inquiry was being vigorously pushed, and, though sorely against her will, quickly came to the conclusion that she had better tell the truth at once, than have it wormed out of her. With an angry glance at Mr. Horwich, whom in her heart she stigmatized as a spiteful old wretch, she replied, "Miss Clover, sir."

"Thank you. That's all you want to know, I suppose?" said Edwards.

"And why on earth couldn't you tell me so at once," exclaimed the bookmaker angrily, addressing Miss Starr, "instead of making all this fuss about it?"

"You asked me whether Miss Penistone was

in the bar at that time," replied the thoroughly irate Harriet. "You know that was not my cousin's real name, and I was not bound to recognize her under her theatrical one. You're her uncle, and know her by sight, and could see for yourself. For all I can tell, she might not wish it known that she had tried a situation not in her own line. She knew I was not well, and it wasn't likely that I was going to acknowledge her kindness in taking my place by occasioning her any annoyance."

"That will do, Miss Starr," replied the manager, with an amused smile at the bookmaker's face, who, though he had got hold of what he wanted to know, looked decidedly conscious of having got hold of a stinging-nettle at the same time.

"I feel really sorry for Lizzie. I'm sure I shouldn't like an inquisitive uncle prying into all my little affairs."

"No," retorted the bookmaker dryly, as the incensed young lady flounced out of the room, "I don't think we should suit."

"I can't make out what on earth you're driving at," remarked Mr. Edwards.

"Nor, to tell you the truth, do I quite know myself," rejoined Mr. Horwich.

CHAPTER XII.

ALTHOUGH a leading character, the villain of the piece usually keeps himself considerably in the background, and in like fashion, much as we have heard of him, we have so far seen very little of Howden Craft. He arrived at Doncaster, as he had written Miss Elton word he should, on the Thursday afternoon, and after having established himself at the "Reindeer," proceeded to carry out his programme; and walked out to St. Katherine's. Old Giggleswick opened the door for him and informed him that his mistress was at Hamerton, but she had ordered the carriage to be sent for her, and he expected her now at any moment. "Wouldn't Mr. Howden step in and wait?" At all events he would take something after his

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walk? Miss Emily was to have stayed till Saturday," continued the butler, "but she's changed her mind, as young ladies will, you know, sir."

Not a word of this was lost upon Howden Craft, and nobody could have more quickly seen the vantage ground it placed him on. Not only was it a tacit approval of himself, which was very gratifying to a man very earnest in his intention to marry her, but further she was compromising herself in the eyes of the neighborhood. That she should cut short her visit at Haneton and hurry home on finding that he was at Doncaster, would certainly have provoked comment if she had announced the cause of her departure, and she certainly would be bound to make some excuse for it. The Gunnersleys and their friends could only put one interpretation upon it. They could only think that there was something more than a cousinly feeling between them, and if the Haneton people did not already know that she had left them for the purpose of receiving him-

self, he half made up his mind that not only they, but all Doncaster, should be speedily informed of the fact. It was a gain to him all round; it closed the mouth of his bitter enemy, the colonel; it would keep other pretenders at a distance, while it was giving him decided encouragement to prosecute his own suit. If he was not a fool, neither was he the man to hide his light under a bushel. He was not a badlooking fellow, and, without being conceited, had no cause to despair of finding favor in any girl's eyes, and yet in spite of all this he could not but perceive when Emily arrived that, though her greeting was kind, it was also constrained. It was easy of explanation. Miss Elton had recognized all this as well as himself, and she was chafing at the thought that the impulsiveness of her nature should have placed her in so false a position. A spirited, hot-tempered young woman, she had flamed out and hurled her indignant protest against what she thought Colonel Gunnersley's gross injustice to her kinsman. How-

den's ill-timed visit had done the rest, and she was conscious that her conduct had been cruelly misconstrued. There never had been any feeling of that nature between them, and the awkwardness his visit occasioned made her wish that he had never come. She was resolved to be loyal to her cousin, and that there should be always a warm welcome for him at St. Katherine's, but she did hope his stay at Doncaster would be short.

Emily Elton was no girl in her teens, but a young woman with a fair knowledge of the world and its ways. If she had lived rather out of it of late years, when she first came out she had been at all the revels in the county and seen three London seasons besides; still she didn't quite understand Howden Craft. That gentleman was most assiduous in his attentions. She could not refuse to walk or drive with her cousin when he pressed it, and the consequence was they were much about together. It was of course chance, but it was strange how often they made their appearance

in Doncaster, and before a week was over it was not only matter of comment, but the tradespeople and other idlers of the sleepy little town, as they lounged at their doors, opined a match would come of it. The gossip of a country town soon spread through its neighborhood, and that Miss Elton was to marry Howden Craft was soon quite a recognized thing. That gentleman, indeed, was more than once or twice congratulated on the engagement, which he always disclaimed with a pleased smile and a shake of the head, and some such remark as, "Pooh! nonsense, my good fellow, weddings don't follow funerals quite so quick as that, you know," which always convinced the speaker that the story was quite true, although he was perhaps a little premature in his felicitations. To Miss Elton his conduct was perfect: his manner was deferential in the extreme. He gave her to understand that her friendship was the thing he valued most in this world; that, like herself, he stood very much alone, and that it was a great stay and comfort to him that one of

his kin held that hideous charge a base calumny; that, his business in Doncaster finished, it would be months before she saw him again; but he did not go, nor was it possible to make out what this business was. That the two were engaged, and that nothing but the recent death of Mr. Elton prevented its being publicly announced, was the firm belief of all Doncaster and its neighborhood. Once, at a shop where Emily was well known, the mistress of the establishment ventured her congratulations; but the indignation with which they were received, and the blunt declaration that there was not the slightest cause for them, if it did not convince the milliner that the rumor was false, caused her to remark that "Miss Elton, like her father, had a fine spirit of her own."

So annoyed was Emily by this last incident that she spoke to her cousin on the subject—said that such a rumor must be put a stop to, and that it was quite necessary that one or the other of them should leave the neighborhood

without delay. Far from making the mistake into which a less clever man might have fallen, of pressing her at once to convert the rumor into fact, Howden replied quietly, "Don't disturb yourself about such nonsense, Emily. In virtue of your fortune you will always be assigned to somebody till your marriage, as well me as another; besides, in forty-eight hours or so I shall be gone." But he did not go. That business seemed to partake of the character of Penelope's web. How much longer Howden Craft might have lingered within the hospitable walls of the "Reindeer" it is impossible to say, but the post brought a letter one morning which caused a frown on his brow, and a malediction from between his teeth, and which, after a quarter of an hour's thought, resulted in an abrupt demand for his bill, and, without even bidding his cousin good-by, Howden departed by the very next train to London. No sooner was he comfortably seated than he drew from his pocket the letter which had caused such a sudden change in his pro-

gramme. It was very brief, and mysterious as a Runic inscription to the uninitiated. It ran as follows:

“DEAR H. C.:

“Very glad indeed to hear you are doing so well since your return. Quite a big thing you have got hold of from all accounts, but I always said you were a clever young man. I'm not one to spoil sport, you know, but don't forget *I must have my little 'perks.'*”

“Yours,

“D. A.”

A contemptuous smile curled Howden Craft's lip as he read it. “The old idiot!” he murmured, “and does he know me no better than that? To think that he could frighten *me!* We have been mixed up in one or two awkward things together, and those who know him naturally think that shallow-pated driveller clever. Ha! my friend David, because you squeeze as you list the luckless cowards who fall into your clutches, you think that all

mankind are curs. You make a little mistake. We shall have a *mauvais quart d'heure*, but, my friend, it will be for you, not me."

It was in no very amiable frame of mind that Howden Craft started to seek an interview with Mr. Abednego. He was exasperated at that worthy presuming to interfere with his schemes, and necessitating his having to leave Doncaster just at that moment. Things there were going well for him, and exactly as he would wish them; and every day he stayed there added strength to the rumor which Emily Elton's imprudence had originally set on foot, and which he had so assiduously extended on every opportunity. He stood in no awe of Mr. Abednego, and could just as easily have said by post what he had come all the way from Yorkshire to say in person; but it was a maxim with Howden in all awkward transactions that pen and paper were best avoided. Mr. Abednego lived in Bolt Court, Fleet Street, and if he had ever heard of the sage who preceded him in that locality, would have held

him in small esteem, as a man who, though he might make books, did not understand the making of money which, according to Mr. Abednego's simple creed, was the sole end of life. He was no more particular whose honey he added to his store than that atrocious brigand, the bee. Indeed, had he ever considered it, he would much have admired that hypocritical insect, who, under the character of honest industry, pursues its career of larceny. Mr. Abednego's system was merely a higher development of the "great Mr. Wild's," that no one should rob without his sharing in the proceeds, and by dexterous and diligent application of this rule he had so far thriven and waxed rich.

Howden was no stranger to the ways of the house, and no sooner was his card sent in than he was at once admitted. The money-lender received him in a room on the first floor, which seemed to be a mixture of study and smoking-room. A very business-like looking table occupied the centre, plentifully strewn with

papers. There was a comfortable armchair on each side of the fireplace; one or two spider tables were scattered about, decorated with open boxes of cigars; there was a bookcase in one corner, the lower shelf of which was furnished principally with wine-glasses and long-necked bottles. Above were a few books, consisting chiefly of racing calendars, a "Peerage," "Burke's Landed Gentry," and several musty-looking ledgers, while seated at the table was a big, stout man with a velvet smoking-cap on his head, the presiding genius of the place.

He rose at the entrance of his visitor, and, laying down his cigar, said: "It's a long time since we met, Mr. Craft. Very glad, indeed, to see you looking so well, sir."

"Yes, thank you," replied the other, with a blandness that gave little indication of the real feelings that possessed him. "I've got home again, at last."

"Quite right, sir. And now you'll be settling down this side, you'll have to get a small stud together again; we can't spare good

sportsmen like yourself in these times, and I hope to see you give the Ring another dose of 'Lady Teazle' before next season's over."

"And I dare say," said Howden contemptuously, "you're quite prepared with a half-a-dozen screws to start me."

"I certainly know where to lay my hands on two or three useful horses—not very high-class, perhaps, but horses, properly placed, that there's a good deal of money to be made over."

"That'll do," said Howden; "that's enough of this fooling. I'd rather trust my own judgment than yours when it comes to that; but it wasn't to sell me race-horses, nor the hope of standing any gain on another 'Lady Teazle,' that made you write to me. What do you mean by this?" he continued, drawing Abednego's note from his pocket, "and what the —— do you mean by your 'little perks'?"

"Dear, dear," rejoined the money-lender, smiling blandly around him, and addressing an imaginary audience, "young men will have

their little jokes; they're always poking their fun at old Abdenego."

"There's very little joking about me. I should have thought you knew me better by this time than to have thought so."

"Well, well, my dear boy, what's the use of calling things by ugly names? Let me put it in this way. There's a young man I know who is just about to make a very wealthy marriage, and it was my good fortune to do this young fellow a very great service a few years ago; in fact, to save him from the consequence of a very great mistake he made. We all make mistakes when we're young."

"Get on," said Howden impatiently.

"Well, you'd naturally think that young man on the eve of his marriage would come to his old benefactor, to whom he owed all this, and say to him: 'My dear old friend, all this happiness is due to you. I must reverse the usual order of things, and, instead of your giving me one, I want to make you a handsome wedding-present.'" And Mr. Abdenego

paused in anticipation of the result of his speech.

"Go on," said Howden curtly.

"I thank him gratefully, but tell him that I am a poor man, and that it would be more useful to me if his generosity took the form of a check, when the only question with that young man would be naturally what he should fill it up for."

"What's your price?" said Howden.

"What a man of business you are, Mr. Craft!" said the money-lender, in much exultation in obtaining his *chantage* so readily. "Five thousand a year is a nice thing to come into, and I congratulate you, sir, with all my heart. Considering what a friend I've been to you, and the trouble I've had in arranging everything, I think a year's income would be about fair."

"You mean that you demand five thousand pounds."

"You shall give me a bill at six months for that amount the week before the wedding, and

that'll make all things quite smooth and comfortable between us," rejoined Abednego.

"And suppose I decline to give you a shilling?"

"Then I'm afraid this wedding won't take place."

"You mean you will prevent it?"

"I think," replied the money-lender, "that a rather awkward incident in your past life might leak out, and will probably break off the match."

"In short, five thousand is the price of your silence," said Howden. "Well, I always play bold with a blackguard like you. I'll not part with a cent. I'll take a maxim out of your own book—one I heard from your own lips: 'There's no friend you can trust like the one round whose neck you can put a rope.' I'll not deny that it may be in your power to stop this marriage, but to do it you must divulge our secret. That threatens no personal danger of any kind to me, but it means penal servitude to you and all the others concerned in it, and

I'll take very good care that you, at all events, get your share."

And in spite of Mr. Abednego's piteous entreaties that he would stop and talk it over, Howden Craft left the room without another word.

"A clever young man," murmured the money-lender, as the street door banged behind his visitor; "almost too clever to last, perhaps. What a partner he would be! With a partner of his nerve I could do anything. But he's wrong not to try and deal with me; I'd have taken less and I can be nasty."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OLD MENU.

CIS FLADBURY was not unmindful of his resolve, and as soon as he got back to Norwich would have lost no time in putting it into execution; but the leave-season had come to an end, and permission for two or three days' absence was no longer easy to obtain. To make Welside's acquaintance was the first thing to be done, and that it was hopeless to expect to do in Norwich. Welside was a confirmed Londoner, and not much given to straying from the Metropolitan area out of the racing season. As soon as he could get to London there would be no difficulty about it. There were plenty of neutral friends who, at a hint from Cis, would bring about a meeting between them. Fladbury's impatience at the delay was further increased by letters from Haneton, from which he learned that Craft still lingered on at Doncas-

ter, and the report that he was engaged to Miss Elton was universally credited by the neighborhood. From what he had seen himself Cis saw no reason to doubt it, but she should at all events know the truth about her *fiancé*, if he could only discover it, for by this time he was as thoroughly impressed by Howden Craft's guilt as either Horwich or Gunnersley. However, he managed to escape from Norwich for a couple of days after a little, and was promptly asked to meet Welside at lunch the day after his arrival in town. Over the cigar in the smoking-room, which inevitably follows a male entertainment of this kind, Cis touched upon the trial, and informed Welside that he had not only known Mr. Elton well, but had stayed at his house for that very Doncaster meeting.

“Ah, it was a Doncaster meeting, and no mistake. By Jove, I don't think this child ever had such a good time on a race-course before or since. And, as good-luck would have it, I had to go back to town after I had seen the Leger.”

“Why?” said Cis. “The last two days were as good as the others.”

“I fancy they were to most people,” said Welside, “but Fletcher had a nailing good thing for the Portland Plate on the Thursday, and if I had been there I should have dropped a lot of money over that. All the stable did, and I should have been sure to be up to my eyes in the swim.”

It was clear to Cis Fladbury that his companion was by no means a reserved man, but disposed, after the manner of most of us, to converse freely about himself and his own doings. “By no means a gifted young man,” he thought, “but with sufficient common sense to keep him out of any serious scrape.” His discourse was of horses, Doctor Johnson might have said, and flavored with the argot of the race-course; but for all that it was the talk of a gentleman, and unembellished by those tales of chicanery and fraud so prolific in the imagination of the low-class turfite.

“By-the-bye, you were present,” said Cis,

“at the celebrated dinner which saved Craft on that occasion?”

Welside nodded assent.

“You knew Craft, of course?”

“By sight only, just as I knew Mr. Abednego. I knew the latter was a money-lender, though I never had dealings with him. Fletcher I was rather thick with. He would always give me a hint when he fancied any of the horses under his management. Yes, it was a queer business, that dinner; just as well for Craft it came off, though. The lawyers, I believe, said there was no case against him, but highway robbery is a pretty mean thing to be accused of.”

Fladbury's hopes sank. It was as he had thought all along. Welside's testimony was unimpeachable; there was no fencing over it whatever. He spoke of this dinner in the open, careless way men do allude to such things. He laughed, as he replied:

“Fletcher must be a good loser. I have read of the grim jest of the famous French *bon*

vivant who invited his friends to dine and attend his funeral, but one don't often celebrate a severe dressing in that fashion."

"Yes, you're right, Fletcher is a good loser, but for all that he never contemplated rejoicing over a run against him in that way. He originally asked me and Brooklyn to dine with him at his lodgings on the Thursday night in Doncaster, in honor of the great *coup* he expected to make in the Portland Plate; but it came off the wrong way, and they dropped so much money over it that they both returned to town sooner than they had intended."

Fladbury became at once keenly interested. He felt he was about to hear the true story of that *alibi*, and there could be no doubt that Welside was a truthful narrator to the best of his ability.

"They returned then on the Thursday night?" he remarked carelessly.

"I don't know, I'm sure; my memory is apt to get a little hazy, but I know it was the day before the dinner at the 'Falcon.'"

"Well, what day was that?" said Cis, laughing.

"Oh, I can't recollect now. If it hadn't been for a bit of luck, I shouldn't have been able to do that poor beggar, Craft, a good turn, and swear to it in the box. You see, two or three weeks had taken place before this robbery business came out, and one was called upon to recollect it. My memory, as I have said is not very good, and then I'd drunk a lot of champagne; you know the sort of thing, when you forget where one day ended and another began."

"Exactly," said Cis, laughing. "When memory becomes a soft haze."

"That's it," said the other; "quite a poetical way of putting it."

"But, may I ask," said Cis, "what was the bit of luck that enabled you to swear to the date of that dinner party?"

"Certainly. I'd put the *menu* in my pocket, one does sometimes, and thrown it on the sitting-room table when I came home, and my

servant had stuck it in the card-rack which hangs above the mantelpiece. There it was, you know, 'Falcon Hotel,' September so and so, you know."

Fladbury was nonplussed. A straightforward man, although his memory might be none of the best, became an unimpeachable witness when he gave evidence from notes made at the time, and that was what this *menu* amounted to. There was no getting away from it; it was of no use arguing that the notes of a drunken man were no more to be relied upon than his memory, that *menu* was dated by somebody connected with the hotel, who it was idle to suppose had filled it in incorrectly. No, Gunnersley, Horwich, and himself might remain fixed in their unbelief; but they would never now, he thought, be able to justify their scepticism.

"I have an old friend," he said at length, "a London man, who dines out a great deal, and never omits to put the *menu* in his pocket; perhaps you're like him."

“Not at all,” returned the other. “I don’t say I’ve never done it before, but I am certainly not in the habit of doing it. There was some talk, I think, about the superiority of cooking at the Falcon, and some one—Mr. Abednego, I rather think—induced me to pocket the *menu*, saying: ‘The next time you want to give a dinner at your club, just try if your cook can beat that.’”

“I don’t suppose you’ve got that *menu* now?” said Cis; “not likely.”

“Blest if I know,” rejoined Welside. “But why? You don’t want to see it, do you?”

“Well, I should rather like to see Fletcher’s idea of a loser’s dinner; there don’t seem to be much of the anchorite’s pulse and spring water about it, according to your account.”

“It’s just possible I didn’t destroy it,” said Welside, “and if I can find it I’ll send it to you.”

“Thanks. Twelfth Lancers, Norwich, will always find me.” And then the more congenial topic of the weights for the City and

Suburban came up for discussion, and shortly afterward the party broke up.

When Cis got back to his regiment and reflected over what had come of making Welside's acquaintance, he was bound to confess very little. It was not very likely that gentleman would find the card of a well-nigh forgotten dinner, and even if he did it would only go to corroborate the truth of that *alibi*. Who of us could recollect the date or particulars of a feast that had taken place some few years before, unless, like the Waterloo banquet, it was in commemoration of some great event? To fix the whereabouts of this dinner at the "Falcon" was very easy, but the exact date had hitherto been supposed to depend in the main on the testimony of Messrs. Fletcher, Brooklyn, Welside and Abednego. Should this *menu* ever reach him, Cis felt it could be only another silent witness for the defence. In a day or two he received a few lines from Welside, enclosing him the carte of that memorable evening. As he anticipated, it confirmed the writer's story,

and, dogged though he still was in his belief, Cis felt that the mystery was beyond his penetration. Cis saw no hope for it. "That scoundrel will succeed," he said to himself; "he's a robber and a murderer, but he'll marry the nicest girl in England, spend her property, and probably ill-treat her, and I shall have to look on. What right have I to interfere in the life of Mrs. Howden Craft? She's a clever woman Mrs. Gunnersley, but she's mistaken this time. I was in the field too late. Emily Elton was wooed and won while I, idiot that I am, was thinking about it."

Now Captain Fladbury had no earthly right to speak in this disparaging way of his rival; but that's just where it was, Howden Craft was his rival, and you might just as well expect one man to speak honestly of another, under those circumstances, as to win if you play with a card sharper. The most liberal, honest, straightforward man, while willingly acknowledging all the good points of his opponent, cannot refrain from a disparaging "but"

in his summing up. At the commencement of this history, Cis quite believed in Craft's innocence, and derided Mr. Horwich for being of an opposite opinion, and now, upon no further testimony than that Mr. Abednego is held in slight esteem by the police, he is quite convinced that Craft is a blood-stained wretch. Love may be blind, but it's astonishing how open-eyed a lover is to the demerits of his rival.

Two or three days afterward, Cis received a letter from Mr. Horwich of a most jubilant description, in which the bookmaker declared that he had all but unravelled the mystery.

"Never fear," he said, "but what I'll explain the whole hanky-panky business to you before long. The whole bag of tricks is as good as in my pocket. You've done your best to help me, Captain Fladbury, and I thank you, but I am strong enough now to play my hand alone, and you have no object in hunting down Craft. I have. I have the cruel wrong done to one of my own flesh and blood to settle with him for.

If I could hang him I would; but after what I heard in Yorkshire, I have no wish to make him repair the wrong he has done, as I first intended. I'll hunt him down nevertheless; if he dares to stay in England, all his friends shall know that he escaped the hulk by trick and perjury. I'll never leave him, and as for marrying my niece, the one thing I am grateful to him for is that he didn't make her an honest woman. As his wife she would have been compelled to share his fortunes. As it is, if I can help it, she shall never see him again. Thanking you once more, sir, for the kind assistance you have given me,

“I am, etc.,

“THOMAS HORWICH.”

The bookmaker had no idea that Cis Fladbury was as keenly interested in the moral conviction of Howden Craft as himself; it might be said more so. It so happened they had never met since that Nottingham meeting at the end of the preceding year. The racing season had

begun again, but various engagements, military and otherwise, had prevented Cis from attending the early meetings in the Midlands; and though a few letters had passed between them, Cis was entirely ignorant of what Mr. Horwich had been doing in the Craft case, with the exception of the little he had picked up at Haneton. The bookmaker's letter was highly provoking. Cis was much interested, and would have liked an accurate account of all his proceedings, but Mr. Horwich's despatch simply proclaimed victory, and did not condescend to any details. He would have liked to have seen him, but that at present seemed hardly feasible. Cis could not get away from Norwich, while Mr. Horwich, now immersed in the full flood of business, like all his brethren, was ubiquitous; so Cis was constrained to console himself with the reflection that there was a probability of Howden Craft receiving a check in his apparently prosperous career.

Mr. Horwich was fully occupied, and he had

scant time to snatch from his professional avocations for the investigation of that *alibi*, but, on the other hand, time was not the object to him that it was to Fladbury. His vengeance upon Howden Craft could wait till his scheme was ripe and the hour had come, but for all that he seized every opportunity he could spare, and clung to the trail as ruthlessly as a tiger to that of a wounded deer. A fresh idea had carried him once more to the Falcon Hotel, and it was after that visit that he wrote that exultant letter to Captain Fladbury. Once more had he sought the proprietor's sanctum, and asked him if he might be allowed to see the books which contained the record of that notorious dinner. Mr. Edwards readily assented, and while he was looking for the ledger in question Mr. Horwich said: "I suppose you would have no difficulty in identifying the handwriting? I want to know whose hand it is in."

"I don't know," said the manager thoughtfully; "I wouldn't be quite sure about that.

I should know Miss Starr's and Miss Young's, because I'm constantly seeing theirs. The bookmaking is mainly done by those two, but as for the two girls that have left, it's a goodish bit since I've seen either of their fists. However, here's the place. No, hang me if I can tell whose writing it is. It's not Miss Starr's nor yet Miss Young's."

"But," said the bookmaker, as he bent over his shoulder, "it is Miss Clover's."

"Ah!" said Mr. Edwards, "I never thought of taking any particular note at the time. If the case had gone on, these girls would have been called. Ah! that's the girl! you have been asking about, isn't it?"

"Just so," rejoined Mr. Horwich. "I'm an old friend of the family, and a little discussion arose at their house the other night. She said she had never been in service, and I said I had seen her behind the bar, and what did she call that? and she just wanted to stick me out I hadn't, that's all."

ence was over her still if he chose to exert it, and it was likely to have been, if anything, even stronger than. What could have been

Craft's object to take that

situation? For Mr. Horwich recollected that

Craft, in those days, was a gentleman with a

LIZZIE'S CONFESSION.

IN the first flush of his discovery, Mr. Horwich thought that the key to the whole mystery of the *alibi* was in his hands; but in a very few minutes his common sense came to his aid, and told him that though he might have got a step on his way, he had practically learnt nothing much that was of any use to him. He had ascertained beyond doubt that Lizzie was assisting in the bar of the "Falcon" at the time that dinner took place; that the entry of it, with all the wine, etc., in the ledger, was in her handwriting; and he knew, moreover, that in consequence of her unfortunate connection with Howden Craft, it was not likely she was there without his knowledge or consent. From what she had said but a few weeks back, it was easy to see what his influ-

ence was over her still if he chose to exert it, and it was likely to have been, if anything, even stronger then. What could have been Craft's object in permitting her to take that situation? For Mr. Horwich recollected that Craft, in those days, was a gentleman with a good deal of swagger and pretension. It was beyond him, and at this stage he felt quite as baffled as Cis Fladbury. At last he resolved to go and have a talk with Lizzie. He had seen nothing of her of late, and from the reticence she had maintained at their last meeting concerning her engagement at the Falcon Hotel, it was not likely that any good would come of a talk with her now. He could but try it. He found Mrs. Clover at home, but it was evident, from her constrained greeting, that she meant keeping careful guard upon her tongue. Beating about the bush was not in the least in Mr. Horwich's line, and he very soon told her that it was no use denying her engagement at the "Falcon;" that her cousin, Harriet Starr, had told him herself that her

cousin had taken her place for a short time when she was ill in September. "And she promised she wouldn't," thought Lizzie.

"I never did deny being at the 'Falcon;' I only refused to say anything about it one way or the other. If Harriet told you that, you can believe it or not, as you like. It's a matter of very little consequence."

"I want to know why you went there," said the bookmaker.

"Goodness!—didn't Harriet tell you that I went there to take her place and give her a little rest? What more do you want, uncle? You don't want me to make out Harriet a liar, do you?"

"Not at all. I know she's that," said the bookmaker, angrily, "and a very impudent hussy besides. Why did you go there?"

"For any reason you like to invent," returned the girl. "You have been told, and you'll get no other answer from me. Do you know Mr. Craft's address?"

"No," said Mr. Horwich, "I don't, and I

shouldn't give it to you if I did." And with that he snatched up his hat, and made what Lizzie described afterward as a tempestuous exit.

Be it as to his next move, Mr. Horwich still felt that he had very nearly hit the mark, and, after cudgelling his brains for some little time, sat down and wrote down an accurate account of his investigations to Mr. Dawes. He received a reply from that gentleman almost by return of post which rather surprised him.

"You have solved the whole riddle," wrote the lawyer. "Had the case proceeded to an end, the *alibi* would probably have crumbled to pieces. How many were actually in the fraud it is difficult to say, but most likely all of them. If you can induce the young lady who made that false entry in the ledger to confess at whose suggestion it was done, you have put your finger upon the chief conspirator. You might ask her the question."

"False entry in the ledger!" exclaimed Mr. Horwich. "What does he mean? Who on

earth has said anything about false entries? He can't surely mean that Lizzie's in it; and if she is, how on earth does he know it?" And the bookmaker hastily went on with his letter in the hope of being enlightened on this point. But there he was doomed to disappointment, for the letter concluded in two or three more lines almost abruptly. If he had solved the whole riddle, Mr. Horwich had certainly no more idea of the answer than before. It was on receipt of this letter that Mr. Horwich had written with such confidence and exultation to Cis Fladbury; but the fact was, this was merely a bold surmise on the part of Mr. Dawes. Cis, in a letter to Colonel Gunnersley, had given an account of his talk with Welside on the trial, and told how that gentleman had been able to refresh an indifferent memory by having, fortunately, put the *menu* of the feast in his pocket. Mr. Dawes was a very sharp lawyer, and that *alibis* have been rehearsed was well within legal experience. It flashed across him at once that that was what had

taken place. The dinner had all actually happened as the witnesses had sworn, but not on the date they had assigned to it. Whether the night after, or the night before the day of the robbery, he couldn't tell, but he felt convinced that was how the fraud had been accomplished. The fact of this girl who was so intimate with Howden Craft being temporarily introduced into the bar, he looked upon as strong confirmation of his suspicions. The Saturday certainly seemed suitable to fix for an entertainment designed to commemorate the anticipated success of the week, and that might have caused the cross-examining counsel to overlook the fact that all these witnesses left Doncaster before the termination of the meeting. The case, as Mr. Dawes argued with himself, was certainly never pushed home, but even as it was, it was a wonder the flaw in that *alibi* was never discovered. That the solution of this question also pressed, the attorney was quite aware. He knew that Colonel Gunnersley and two or three more of Mr.

Elton's old friends were terribly afraid that Miss Elton would marry Howden Craft, and if what he suspected to be the truth could only be elicited with regard to the robbery, all further danger of that would be of course at an end.

Mr. Horwich was a man of decision. He didn't understand it all himself, but he looked upon Mr. Dawes as a very sharp lawyer, and resolved to do his bidding immediately. He found Lizzie at home, and wasted but little time in preliminaries, coming to his object with a directness most praiseworthy.

"Now," he said, "I'm come down here to ask you a question or two, which it is as like as not you won't answer. If I was a bit rough when I first found out you had no right to wear a wedding-ring, you must bear in mind, my girl, that I've always been as fond of you as if you were my own flesh and blood, that I've been proud of you, and always looked forward to the time when you'd be a real top sawyer before the footlights."

"I know, uncle, you've always been very

kind," replied the girl, visibly softening in her defiant manner toward him.

"Now, I know that you were in the office at the 'Falcon,' and I know that the account for a certain dinner, at which Mr. Craft was present, was entered by you."

She made a slight gesture of surprise.

"I've seen it, and I know your handwriting. What did you make a false entry for?"

"And who says I did make a false entry?" rejoined the girl.

"I do," replied Mr. Horwich. "You see, that dinner made a deal of stir. You know Howden Craft was tried for what had happened that day, and if it hadn't been for that dinner, it might have gone hard with him."

"Howden tried for anything that took place that evening!" exclaimed the girl with such astonishment as, if not genuine, did infinite credit to her histrionic powers.

"He was tried for a robbery that took place that afternoon. What's the use of humbugging? You must recollect all about it."

“I don't, I tell you. I never knew that Howden was tried—I never heard it.”

“Why, how could you have helped hearing of it?” cried Mr. Horwich. “It was in all the papers, and made fuss enough at the time.”

“A few days afterward,” replied Lizzie, “I began to feel seedy, and Howden sent me into the country, to a farm-house he knew of, and there I remained till after my boy was born. It was quite country, you know, and a paper rarely came near the house.”

“Howden Craft, as I tell you, was tried for a highway robbery committed that very afternoon, and acquitted mainly on the ground that to have committed that robbery in Yorkshire and to have been present at that dinner in Aldersgate Street was impossible.”

“But what had the dinner to do with it?” exclaimed Lizzie, utterly failing to comprehend the drift of her uncle's speech. “Howden tried and acquitted! I never heard of it before. Acquitted! ah, thank Heaven for that. How could they suspect him of such a thing?”

“Well, they did,” replied the bookmaker, doggedly. “And now do you mind telling me why you falsified that ledger?”

Mr. Horwich was persistent in his point, but for all that, strange to say, it had not yet occurred to him how the ledger had been falsified. Had Dawes been within reach, he would have questioned him as to what all this was to lead to. As it was, he was obeying his directions blindfold.

“You said Howden was acquitted, and this charge never can be brought against him again. Is it not so?” said Lizzie.

Mr. Horwich nodded.

“Well, I promised Howden,” continued the girl, “never to tell about the joke of that dinner, but you seem to have got hold of some wrong notion concerning it. You don’t mean any harm to Howden, do you?”

“I told you he had been declared innocent,” said the bookmaker, Jesuitically. “He can’t be accused again.”

“Well, it all began on a bet,” said Lizzie.

“Mr. Fletcher had asked some gentlemen to dinner, and Howden had made a bet with him that one young man of the party, who was rather foolish and given to taking more wine than was good for him, should be so confused before the evening was out that, if the others would help him, he would be unable at the end of the following week to say what day he had dined at the ‘Falcon.’”

A prolonged whistle burst from Mr. Horwich's lips, as the ingenuity of the plot shot athwart his mind. “I see,” he exclaimed at length. “The date of your entry in the ledger was false.”

“Just so; the dinner was dated as having occurred on the 17th, while in reality it took place on the 16th, the evening before.”

“Ah, I understand it all now,” said Mr. Horwich. “But, Lizzie, my dear, I am very much afraid Howden Craft is a bad lot, and it would be best for you never to see him again. Remember, he has been in England now some months, and he's made no efforts to find

you all this time, and, did he wish it, he knows very well how to set about it."

The girl made no reply. She was cruelly wounded by the contemptuous indifference of her lover. She knew what her uncle said was true, and that Howden Craft would have had very little difficulty in discovering where she was living had he been so minded. She felt that he had left her for good, and that if ever they met again it would be too surely as strangers.

and he thought it would be as well to arrange the facts he had got at in due legal form, and who so fit to do that as the astute Dawes? It was clear to Mr. Horwich that it was ab-

olutely necessary to consult the lawyer, tell him Miss Glover had confessed to

the falsification of the date of the dinner, and

Mr. Horwich's admiration of the attorney's sagacity knew no bounds. "How did he do

it?" he murmured. "There he sits in that office of his at Doncaster, and ferrets the whole thing out without moving. Wonderful fellow,

Dawes; uncommon sharp of him to find out that trick about the dates." As we know, Mr. Dawes had done nothing of the sort. He had

made a shrewd guess and it had turned out right, that was all, but the bookmaker was quite convinced that Dawes knew what the re-

sult of his questioning Lizzie Penistone would be. Mr. Horwich's first impulse was what he termed "have it out with Craft at once;"

but, in the first place, he didn't know where that gentleman was exactly, and, in the sec-

ond, he thought it would be as well to arrange the facts he had got at in due legal form, and who so fit to do that as the astute Dawes? It was clear to Mr. Horwich that it was absolutely necessary that he should consult the lawyer, tell him Miss Clover had confessed to the falsification of the date of the dinner, and take counsel with him what measures they had best take to compel Craft's immediate exile. If the bookmaker had started with the intention of forcing Howden to do his niece justice, that most assuredly was the last thing he wished now. He had not failed to notice how sadly weak she was where this man was concerned. He had been her lover, betrayed her and deserted her, but she clung to him still, as women sometimes will. Her uncle had seen this all too clearly, and only dreaded lest Craft should succeed in once more getting Lizzie into his power, and, in spite of the shameful way he had behaved to her, Mr. Horwich had an uneasy feeling that should the two once meet, a few soft words from How-

den's lying tongue would make the girl as much his slave as ever. If he could help it, Lizzie should never see Craft again, and to that end he desired to force him to leave the kingdom; and that, he thought, would be a small price to pay for silence regarding that terrible scandal of a few years back. He recollected a little uneasily Colonel Gunnersley's remark that circumstances might compel him to reopen the case. "But that's all nonsense," he thought. "The hot-tempered remark of an angry man. The fellow got clean off at the time, and you can't really touch him, even if you would, on the old charge now."

On arrival at Doncaster, Horwich lost no time in calling on the attorney, and though Mr. Dawes never for one moment allowed that it had not all actually been known to him before, he rubbed his hands with much satisfaction as he listened to the bookmaker's story. "Got him on the hip now, haven't we?" exclaimed the latter. "And I won't let the beggar hedge a halfpenny. Out of the coun-

try he clears, neck and crop, as soon as ever I can find him."

"Well," said the other, "you've not far to go to do that, for he's staying at the 'Reindeer.'"

"No!" cried Mr. Horwich. "Like his confounded cheek to come swaggering down here, about a mile from where he murdered his uncle, but I'll have him out of that. I'll give him forty-eight hours to quit the country, or the very boys in the street shall call him murderer as he goes by."

"My good sir, this won't do at all," said the attorney. "This is not at all the way to deal with such a clever rascal as we've got to fight against. We must have our case already marshalled in due form, and even then, remember, when we've made it as strong as we can, we are in no position to dictate terms. It can only be a compromise at the best."

"Well, I suppose you know best," rejoined Mr. Horwich, "but I get kind of mad when I think of that chap. I should like to have

hunted him out of the town this very afternoon. He won't just as well as he seems to expect.

"Now, Mr. Horwich," said the attorney, speaking somewhat authoritatively, "you must just be guided by me. I'll do everything that is necessary, and in three or four days we shall be able to convince Mr. Howden Craft that the best he can do will be to retire to America or on the Continent. Can you meet Colonel Gunnersley here to-morrow at four?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Horwich, "but I don't see much use in it. The Colonel has had his shy at the case, and is not likely to busy himself about it again."

"You'll be here, then, at four," said the lawyer, as he nodded good-by. While chafing bitterly at what to him appeared a most unnecessary delay, the bookmaker returned to his old quarters at the "Salutation."

Howden Craft's audacity looked as if it was going to be crowned with success. Marriage with his wealthy cousin he had long looked upon as the biggest prize he was likely to

draw in life's lottery, and never had his prospects seemed so fair as just now. He was aware that the neighborhood had looked somewhat askance at him when he made his reappearance; but the bold way in which Miss Elton championed his cause, and the rumor that he was about to be married to her, had caused several people to reconsider their line of conduct. That old past-and-gone scandal was surely laid to rest long ago. It was all nonsense to consider him guilty of a charge of which he had been legally proved innocent. Miss Elton was a very nice but high-spirited girl, and very touchy about anything relating to her *fiancé*. It would be a nuisance to be shut out of such a nice house as St. Katherine's, and so Howden Craft was gradually slipping back into the old place in society round Doncaster which he occupied before the September meeting of '87. With Emily, too, he was progressing admirably, he thought. If no word of love had as yet ever passed his lips, he had still so far entangled her, that should she re-

ject him when he spoke, she would certainly be held to have treated him badly. That girls do that at times no one knew better than Howden Craft, but another thing he plumed himself on was that he had succeeded so far in keeping all likely aspirants to her hand at a distance. But he was aware that he was skating on very thin ice, and Mr. Abednego had given him an unpleasant hint that some of his former *confrères* might seek to participate in his prosperity. He knew perfectly well he could set them at defiance, but then also in a moment they could shatter this web he had been so industriously weaving. He knew it was a ticklish time, and had no intention of prolonging it a day further than he could help, but even had he deemed it wise he could hardly speak as yet. That any one was tracking out the story of the *alibi* he had no idea, but that the participators in it, like Mr. Abednego, were all likely to demand *chantage* he thought probable, and, bold game as he played with Mr. Abednego, he was still a little appre-

hensive about what that worthy might do next. Under these circumstances he had hurried back to Doncaster so quickly that few people were aware of his brief absence. It might be unwise to precipitate matters with Emily Elton, but assuredly it would be very foolish to let any doubt arise in people's minds of his being an accepted lover.

At four the next day Mr. Horwich duly presented himself at the attorney's office. He found Colonel Gunnersley had already arrived there. He greeted the bookmaker shortly, and said, "I may as well tell you at once, Mr. Horwich, that the circumstances of which I spoke have not yet arisen. My hands are still tied. Dawes there will tell you the whole story, at least as far as he is allowed to tell it."

"I have got here," said the attorney, "the notes I made at the time, and also those I have made since Mr. Horwich first came to me. The first thing that cast suspicion upon Howden Craft was a wild exclamation that escaped John Elton's lips as he recovered conscious-

ness. You must remember that he had lain insensible on the moor for some little time before he was found and brought to his home. This exclamation was made before an old friend and the medical man who was attending him, and was to the effect that Howden was an ungrateful scoundrel, and without delay Colonel Gunnersley signed a warrant for the apprehension of Craft, and urged the police to execute it without delay. Mr. Elton made but that one exclamation before relapsing once more into insensibility. He was for some days delirious, and when he came to his right mind denied all knowledge of his assailant, and declared that he could not identify him in the least. He was very persistent in his inquiries as to what he had said while out of his senses, and upon being told of the remark he had made about his nephew, said that he had talked less foolishness than he might have done; that people when off their heads were apt to talk all sorts of balderdash; that it was queer he should connect Howden with the robbery;

but, of course, these two gentlemen had to tell the little they could when the warrant was applied for, and in the mean time it also came to our knowledge, from a conversation overheard in the Grand Stand, that the followers of Fletcher's stable had lost a good deal of money, and that a tremendous plunge they had had upon their horse in the Portland Plate, to recover their losses, had proved a veritable Moscow."

"I may as well mention," interposed Colonel Gunnersley, "that if it hadn't been for my persistence the case would have been dismissed by the magistrates and never sent for trial."

"Just so," continued the attorney, "and even after that it would never have gone into court, if it hadn't been for an anonymous correspondent in London, who declared himself capable of giving most important evidence, who declared that he knew the whole scheme of the defence, which was simply an ingenious fraud from beginning to end. This correspondent demanded a handsome sum of money

for his testimony, in order to enable him to go to America and begin life again there. Evidence that has to be bought is not, as a rule, good for much, but that this man had some knowledge of the whole thing was soon evident. He told us that Howden Craft had lost a very heavy sum of money during that week, which we knew to be true; that he had been at his wits' end as to how he was to pay it; and further, that the defence was to consist of an *alibi*, of which he could point out the weak place. We agreed at length to his terms, and received a reply, in which he undertook to meet us at a certain tavern near the Law Courts the day before the trial. He pleaded he ran a considerable risk of discovery in communicating with us, and also that the whole line of defence might very likely be changed should discovery take place, and that he would then be of no further use to us. What took place I don't know, but that was the witness who failed us at the last moment. Those are facts, Mr. Horwich. I suppose now you can

guess who we imagine our correspondent to have been?"

"Yes," said the bookmaker; "I should think it would be that chap Clawson, who wasn't forthcoming on their side either."

The attorney nodded. "How the whole thing was done," he continued, "is now transparent, and the proof of it all rests with Miss Clover. The dinner undoubtedly took place, but not on the day named, and I have no doubt that the *menu* which guided Mr. Wel-side's memory, guided also the memories of the rest of the party, and that they were all just as falsely dated as the ledger."

"There," said the Colonel, somewhat impatiently, "that story is told, thank goodness. Now, Dawes, the question is what are you going to do next? How's Howden Craft to be settled, squelched, made to clear out of Doncaster?"

"I warned you," replied Dawes, "that we must end in a compromise. Mr. Craft is a man we are not likely to frighten, and then,

Mr. Horwich, you would not wish that Miss Clover should be placed in the witness-box. Her relations with Craft would necessarily have to be touched upon."

The bookmaker's countenance was troubled. Most assuredly, he did not wish Lizzie's shame proclaimed to the world.

"I presume," said the attorney, "that a reasonable sum of money can be found to expedite Howden Craft's departure from England."

Gunnersley nodded, while Mr. Horwich exclaimed vehemently:

"I'm good for a thousand, ay, maybe two, if you'll promise to hunt that scoundrel out of England for me, but, mind you, I'll not pay him to go."

"Don't be alarmed; not a shilling shall find its way into his pocket. We'll threaten to proceed against Mr. Abednego for perjury and compounding a felony. I have no doubt that he is one of those consummate rogues who would sell his own mother if he was paid

for it. I will then call upon him, show him that we have unravelled the whole conspiracy, and put it to him as a sensible man whether it wouldn't be wiser to write us out a confession of the whole affair, accept five hundred pounds in payment for his trouble, and have all proceedings at once quashed against him. Armed with that confession, I don't think Mr. Howden Craft will give us much trouble."

Once more was the bookmaker filled with admiration for Mr. Dawes' astuteness, and when the attorney announced his intention of starting the next day for London, to set the necessary legal machinery in motion, and further of not returning until he had seen Mr. Abednego, Mr. Horwich at once settled to accompany him, and congratulating themselves on having done a good morning's work, the trio then separated.

CONCLUSION.

GREAT was the disappointment of Mr. Horwich when, on their arrival in town, he found that he was not to accompany the attorney to Bolt Court. He had looked forward to seeing Dawes tackle Abednego, much as he would have looked forward to the meeting of two mighty champions of the race-course, or as men, years ago, anticipated the classic battle of Farnborough, but the attorney was very resolute on the point.

“It can't be, Mr. Horwich, it can't be. When a man, let him be ever so big a scoundrel, is going to sell his friends, he doesn't want witnesses to the transaction. No, Mr. Abednego and I will get on better by ourselves.”

The money-lender was accustomed to being sought by all sorts of strange clients on all

sorts of strange errands, but it was one of his rules that before he saw them he should know, at all events, what they called themselves, and their occupation. It was quite as often "a bit of a note" as a visiting-card, but it was more often true than false. Mr. Abednego enjoyed the reputation of being a man with whom it was hopeless to do business unless you showed him your whole hand. All this Mr. Dawes had lately been made to understand by the bookmaker, who finally added, "I don't know, mind you, for certain, but I've an idea that 'chaps in trouble' often consult him."

No sooner did the lawyer's card reach Mr. Abednego's hands than his business was at once made clear.

MR. DAWES,

Attorney-at-law,

In re Craft,

told the whole story; and having ordered the servant to show the gentleman up, he mur-

mured to himself, "Somebody's got an inkling that *alibi* wasn't quite genuine. This promises to be a little unpleasant for Howden Craft."

No sooner did Dawes enter than the money-lender recognized him at once, although he had never set eyes on him since the trial.

"Good-morning, Mr. Abednego," said the lawyer. "Time is money, I'm quite aware, and therefore don't suppose I'm going to waste yours. Certain facts have lately come out with reference to the case I referred to on my card, which will enable us to prove that the *alibi*, to which you and three other gentlemen swore upon that occasion, was an utter fraud, and that you all four swore falsely."

"Quite so," replied Mr. Abednego, as calmly as if swearing indifferently to what might be convenient was the usual custom. "What then?"

"That being in possession of a clear case against you, we shall indict you all for perjury."

"No, you won't," replied Abednego. "I thought we weren't to waste time."

"You will find I don't," rejoined Dawes. "If you will step to this window you will see a sergeant of police in the court. He has a warrant to arrest you on that charge in his pocket, and will execute it as soon as I leave the house."

"He will do nothing of the kind, and you know it," returned the money-lender coolly.

"Why can't you come to the point? You'd not be such a fool as to come to me without having all the paraphernalia of the show ready. I'm not worth spending powder and shot on. What good would it do you to put me in prison for a year or two? The man you want to get at is Howden Craft. He's behaved very scurvily to me lately."

The attorney remained silent. He was thinking what his next move had better be.

"Better be open at once, Mr. Dawes, it saves time. Now, you no more want to prosecute me for perjury than you do the Lord

Mayor. I never keep anything that's not for sale, not even secrets."

If Mr. Dawes had been hesitating over his next move, Mr. Abednego was also thinking how much he should ask for his information. Five thousand pounds it was absurd to expect, for, though he affected to ignore it, he was quite aware that on that little matter of perjury, to use his favorite simile, Mr. Dawes had got the rope round his neck. He had no ambition to try the prisons of his country; still less to be recorded in the annals of the police.

"If we drop this charge," said Dawes at length, "will you confess the whole story of that *alibi*? And we'll give you an undertaking on our part——"

"Bosh!" interrupted the money-lender; "never mind the undertaking; you give me two thousand pounds, and you shall have it in writing from end to end."

"Well, Mr. Abednego," replied the attorney at last, "we don't want to revive the old scan-

dal any more than you do; the confession will serve our purpose just as well. Say a thousand pounds, and it's a bargain."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Abednego, with a melancholy shake of his head, "I'm afraid the old scandal must crop up again, and I must take my chance," and as he said so it flashed across him how dearly he should like, metaphorically, to give Howden Craft a rap over the knuckles.

"Ah," replied the attorney, picking up his hat meditatively, "I've gone to the utmost limit of my instructions and things must take their course. One consolation for you, Mr. Abednego: the Craft case has shown us that the uncertainty of the law almost equals the uncertainty of the turf."

The money-lender was not in the least blinded by the attorney's reference to "his instructions." He felt certain that Mr. Dawes had *carte blanche*, but he also came to the conclusion that he meant to bid no higher,

and then to pay Howden Craft off in his own coin was a great temptation.

"Stop, Mr. Dawes!" he exclaimed; "it's a deal. Sit down again and I'll tell you the whole story, and you can put it on paper. Craft, I suppose, is still at Doncaster?"

"Yes," replied the attorney, as he drew his chair to the table and took up a pen. According to the money-lender the *alibi* was originally Craft's idea, but it was left for him, Mr. Abednego, to carry out the details. The fact of Lizzie holding a temporary situation at the Falcon Hotel had no doubt first suggested it to him. On the Thursday afternoon, the disaster of the Portland Plate had virtually broke Howden Craft, and he did not know where to turn for money to meet his liabilities on the following Monday. To appeal to his uncle was useless; he had helped him over and over again; but Mr. Elton was very cock-a-whoop about his unusual success, and had bragged openly in the smoking-room on the Thursday night that if Carlton won the cup

the next day, he should have a real handsome sum to pay into the bank at Doncaster on Saturday. The evening papers on the Friday told him that his uncle's selection had been successful, and Craft then determined that Mr. Elton's winnings should never reach their destination. The dinner had taken place on Friday, the evening of the 16th. It had been ordered by Fletcher, at Craft's instigation, early on the morning of that day. He, Mr. Abednego, had slipped into the dining-room a few minutes before dinner, and changed the properly dated *menus* then on the table for a similar set, the date of which had been filled in by himself, and of course corresponded with the entry made in the ledger. Fletcher and Brooklyn, he said, were entirely ignorant of the meaning of the fraud at the time, and he contrived that each of them should take away a *menu* in his pocket, believing, as Lizzie had told Mr. Horwich, that the mystification was for the sole purpose of winning a bet. Of course they realized what it all meant at the

trial, and nothing but the strong pressure put upon them about "Lady Teazle" kept them straight in the witness-box.

Mr. Abednego's ideas of keeping straight were peculiar.

"As for Clawson, little blackguard," continued that gentleman, "he was a clerk in my office, whom I could trust to lie through anything, but that's the worst of it; just as they become useful they become mercenary and they let you through. I discovered barely in time that he was in correspondence with your side, and had to ship him off to America. Cost me a lot of money, that did, but of course he had his price."

Mr. Abednego's confession being at length satisfactorily got on paper and the conditions of the payment adjusted to his wish, that worthy appended his signature, and said he presumed that there was nothing more Mr. Dawes desired to be informed about.

"No," replied the attorney as he placed the money-lender's statement in his pocket; "this

I think will be quite sufficient for our purpose, and you need fear no further interference on the part of the law."

"Good-by, sir," said Mr. Abednego. "I think I can make a pretty good guess as to what you're driving at, but if I should chance to be mistaken and you have any business with Howden Craft, I should advise you not to delay in getting through with it."

Mr. Dawes looked at him inquiringly.

"I have an idea," continued the money-lender, in reply to the attorney's mute appeal, "that Mr. Craft will not only leave Doncaster, but England, before many days are over."

"Ah, you know he's at Doncaster?" said Mr. Dawes.

"Yes, as long as he's in England it will be always my business to know where he is and what he's doing."

"And you think——" said the attorney.

"That Howden Craft is an industrious young man," interposed Mr. Abednego, "and not

given to waste time as we are doing this minute." Mr. Dawes took the hint, and, with a nod to the unabashed money-lender, he made the best of his way back to the "Falcon," where, according to appointment, Mr. Horwich was anxiously awaiting him.

The bookmaker was highly delighted at Dawes' account of the conference between him and Mr. Abednego. He hardly knew which to admire most, the man who had contrived the rascally fraud or the man who had exposed it. And his regret that he had not been present at the tussle between them was keener than ever.

"It beats cock-fighting, sir, or the closest set-to ever seen at Newmarket. It's a great feather in your cap, Mr. Dawes. No man ever got to the bottom of Abednego and no man ever will, but you've gone as near to it as may be."

Mr. Dawes and the bookmaker returned to Doncaster by the afternoon train, and after a

preliminary conference held at Mr. Dawes' office the next morning, resolved to confront Howden Craft at once. No sooner were the names of Colonel Gunnersley and Mr. Dawes brought in as waiting to see him on urgent business, than Craft scented danger in the air. The combination was ominous—he had no more uncompromising foe in all Doncaster than the Colonel, and Dawes he knew well was his attorney. He might have declined to see them, but for a note he had received that morning. Scoundrel he might be, but he was no craven, and had great confidence in the keenness of his wits when pitted against those of others. He glanced once more at the note the morning's post had brought him. He ground his teeth at the thought that the game was up, and the great *coup* he looked so near winning would never come off.

“DEAR CRAFT,” wrote the money-lender, “it’s always a mistake in business to lose your temper. As I told you, I must have my little

perks, and you—well, I'll only say were foolish about it. I have dealt now with the other side, who thought a good round sum down worth paying for the secret of our little puzzle. Mankind is sadly curious. I hope this won't interfere with your schemes, but remember I offered to deal with you first. Always think twice before you decide a man is not worth buying. You shouldn't forget that if I hadn't bought Clawson at once you might have been 'doing time' now.

"Yours truly,

"D. A."

When the trio entered the room Craft was considerably puzzled by the appearance of Mr. Horwich. For a minute or two he did not remember him, and when he did, it was a vague recollection of his being a bookmaker with whom he had had some unpleasantness. He had no idea of the relationship between him and Lizzie. Mr. Dawes opened the proceedings as quickly as possible, by saying they held

complete proofs that the *alibi* by which he, Howden Craft, was acquitted of highway robbery was a fraud, in support of which assertion he had best simply read the confession of Mr. Abednego, one of the witnesses to it. To this Craft willingly assented. He wanted time to think. When the attorney had finished, he said sharply:

“And what’s all this precious farrago to me? What the deuce have I got to do with it? Even suppose this carefully concocted lie is all true, you as a lawyer know that I can’t be tried again.”

“We believe it to be true,” returned Mr. Dawes, “and have plenty of corroborative evidence besides. We can’t try you, but we shall indict all your companions for perjury.”

Craft shrugged his shoulders as he replied: “I can’t help it. I am sorry that innocent men should be put to such trouble on my account.”

“Innocent!” chimed in the Colonel sternly.

“If Mr. Abednego spoke truth in court, he’s lying consummately now.”

“You must do as you please, gentlemen,” returned Craft calmly. “As I say, it doesn’t concern me.”

“Not concern you?” said the Colonel. “A truce to all this nonsense. You understand perfectly well what we mean. You’ve come down here to marry Miss Elton. I’m indicting your fellow-conspirators for perjury to stop it. No woman can be expected to keep faith with a murderer.”

Craft winced under the taunt, for, though no actual murderer, he knew that the violence his uncle’s sturdy resistance had obliged him to use, had resulted in injuries that had at all events crippled him for life.

“For the sake of your family,” continued the Colonel, “I’ll offer you this chance. Leave Doncaster to-day, and England within a week, and your companions shall go scot-free. Refuse, and I unearth the old scandal.”

For a minute or two Craft hesitated. He

reflected that his opponents knew too much, that his chance of marrying his cousin was at an end.

"There's a duty," he said at last, "one owes to one's friends. They stood loyally to me in my trouble; I am bound to save them from the odium and expense of refuting such a calumny."

"One of your friends, at all events, don't mean going to much expense in defending himself," sneered the Colonel.

Craft cast a furious glance at him, but, profiting perchance by the advice of that economical friend, mastered his passion, and simply replied: "I leave Doncaster by the afternoon train."

"And England within the week?" said Mr. Dawes.

Craft bowed his head in assent.

"Well, I'm ——! Of all the howling hypocrites I ever saw," exclaimed Mr. Horwich, "that chap takes the cake."

Two years have passed and gone since then, and Howden Craft has never been seen in Doncaster since that afternoon. Miss Elton too disappeared one fine morning, but as she reappeared as Mrs. Fladbury within half an hour, there was nothing but congratulations, much feasting, bell-ringing, rice and slippers flying about for the remainder of the afternoon. On the eve of Emily's marriage, Colonel Gunnersley opened a letter which had been placed in his hands by John Elton, with directions that it was to be opened as soon as his daughter Emily was known to be positively engaged, and it was left to the Colonel's discretion whether it should be ever communicated to the girl or not. In it John Elton said that he had no doubt as to who was his assailant, and, as proof of his belief, pointed to the revocation of his original bequest of ten thousand pounds to Howden Craft. He had further made his nephew's leaving England immediately after the trial a condition of his silence on the subject. That his object was to effectually prevent a marriage

between the cousins was evident, and, that object attained, Gunnersley threw the letter into the fire and kept the contents to himself.

As for Lizzie Penistone, she yielded to her infatuation and was persuaded to accompany her lover into exile. He this time showed much worldly wisdom in marrying her, for she made a considerable stage success in America, and Howden Craft was neither the man to allow her to make insufficient terms with managers nor to neglect to draw her salary when due.

THE END.

A MEMBER OF TATTERSALL'S

A NOVEL

BY

HAWLEY SMART

AUTHOR OF

"A FALSE START," "FROM POST TO FINISH," "LONG ODDS,"
"SADDLE AND SABRE," ETC.

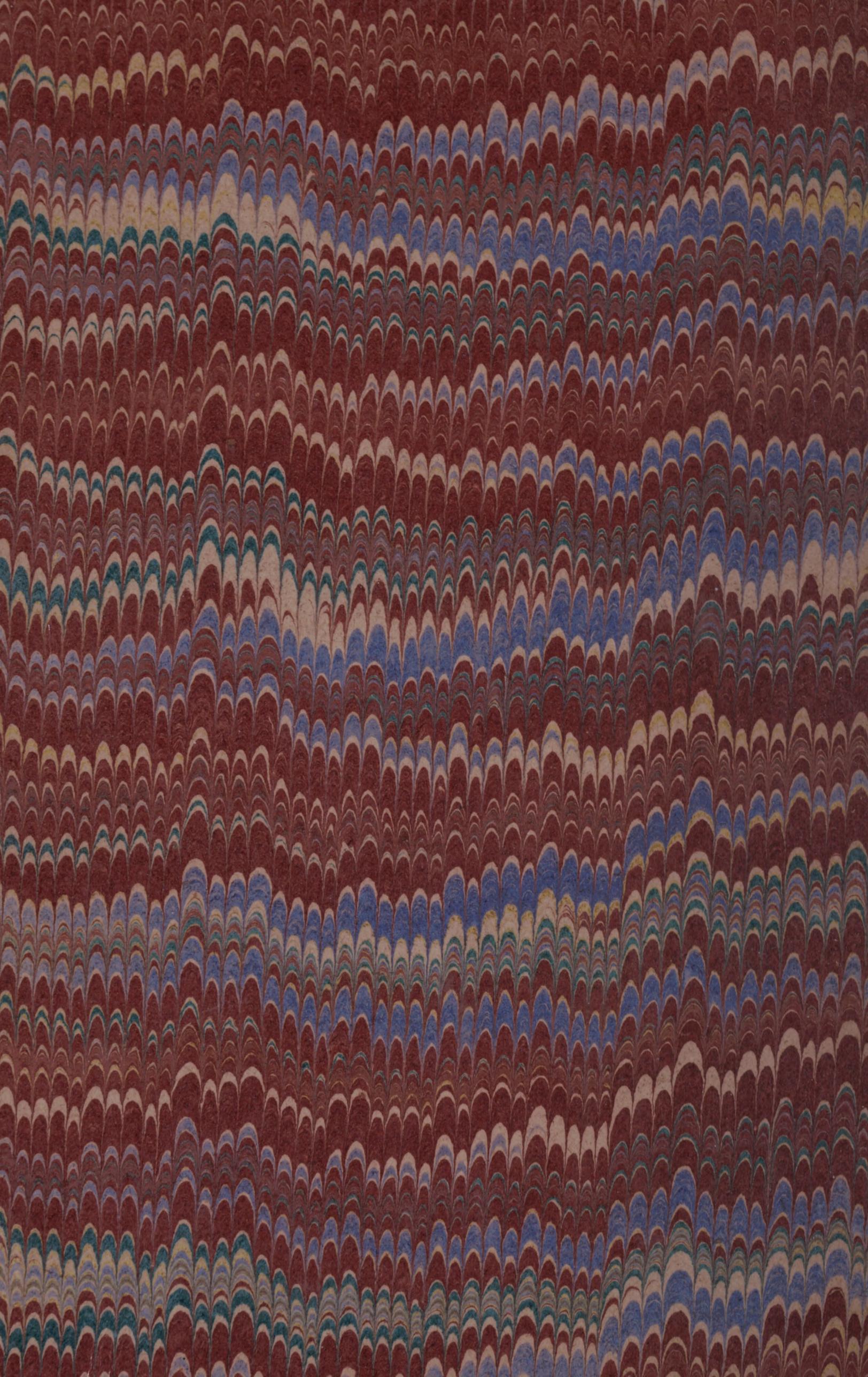
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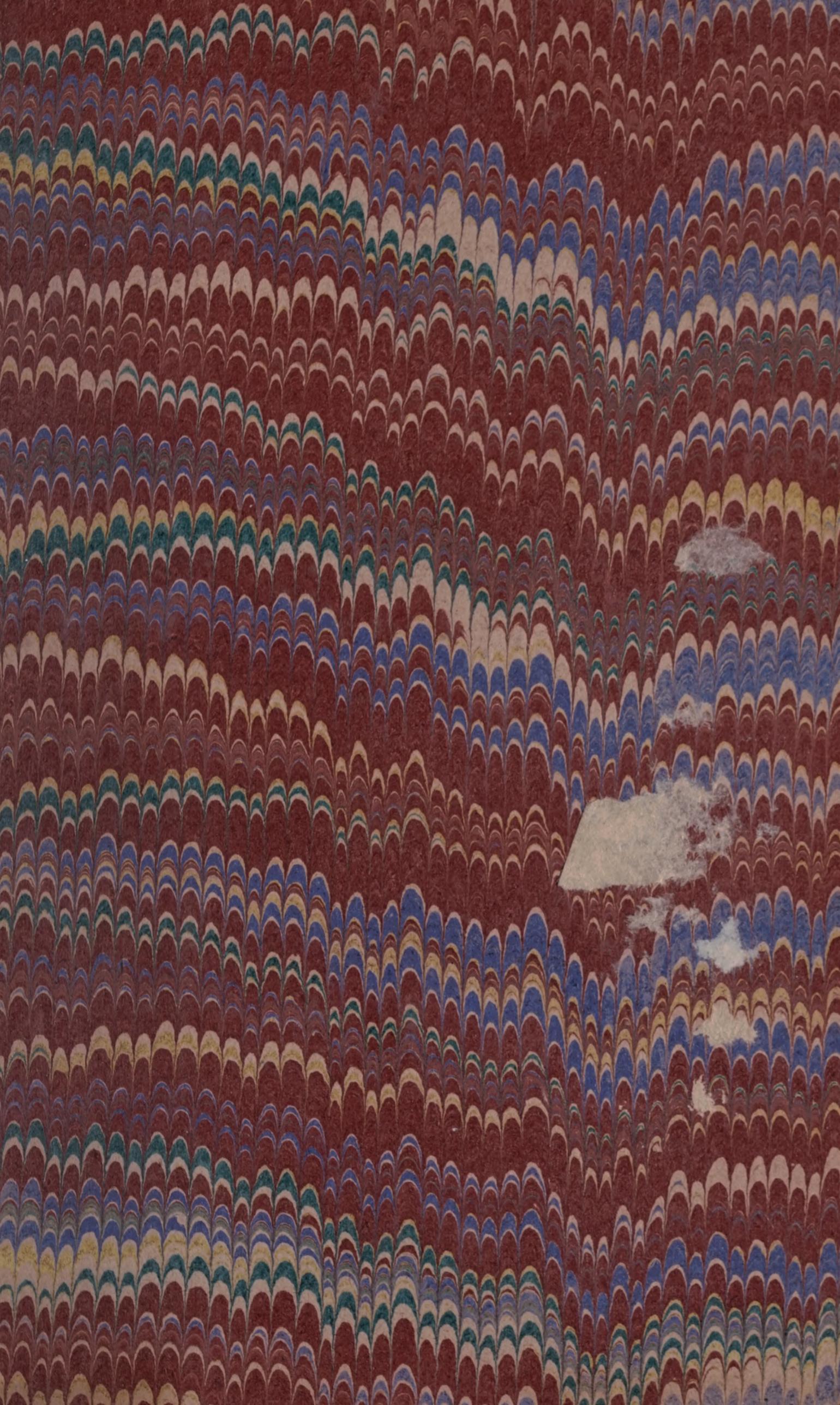
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